

سكرا من الاصل




THE INDEPENDENT


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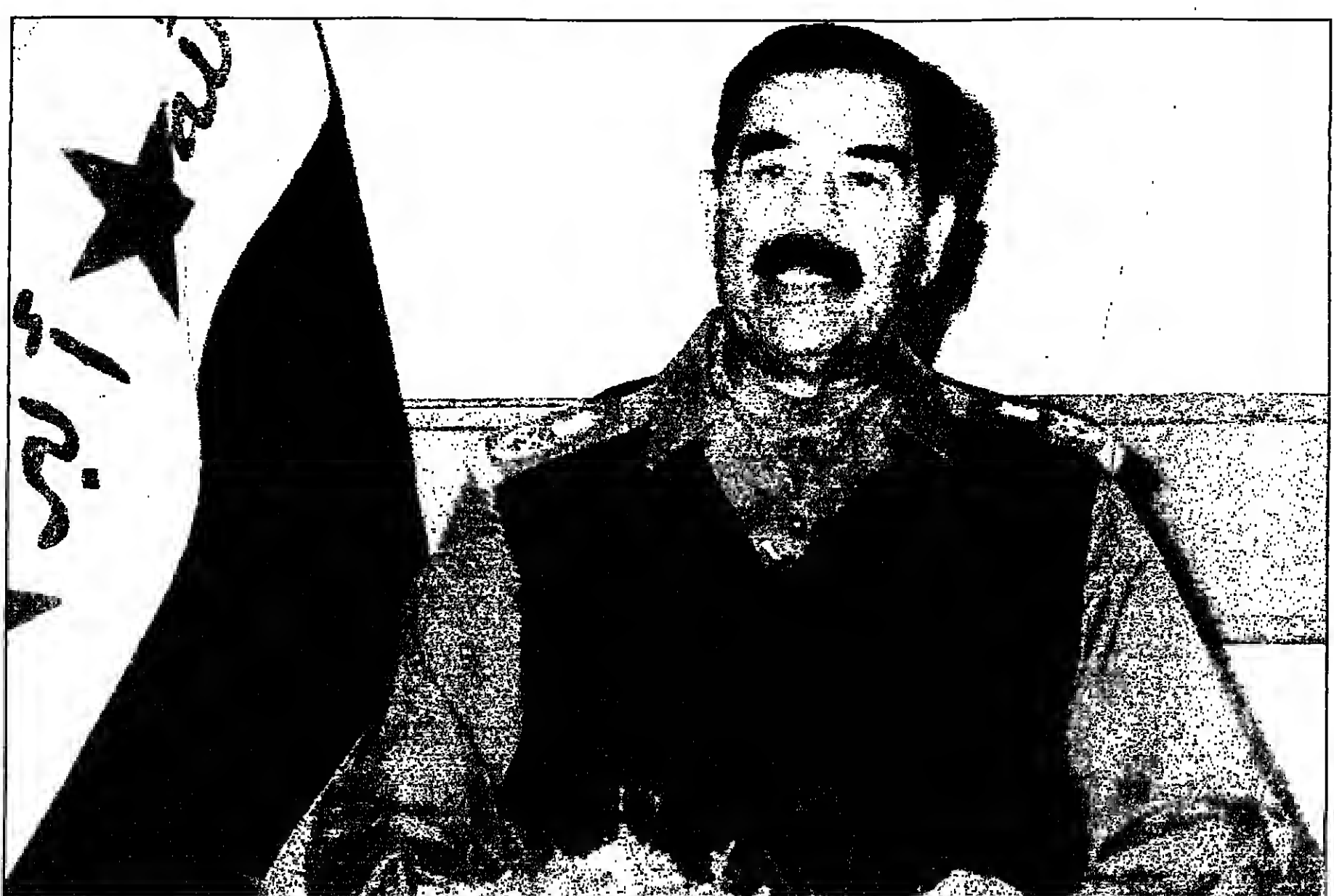
TEN PAGES OF SPORT IN THE WEEKEND REVIEW

**FOLLOW
BRITAIN'S
TOP TIPSTER**

**THE LAWSUIT
AFTER THE
NIGHT BEFORE**

SUE ARNOLD • GAVIN ESLER • HOWARD JACOBSON • TRACEY MACLEOD • ANNA PAVORD • JEREMY LEWIS

Saddam refuses to back down as the war planes hit again



President Saddam Hussein addressing the Iraqi nation on television yesterday, as he urged the people to continue resisting US and British air strikes

SADDAM HUSSEIN was defiant towards America and Britain yesterday as air raids continued into a third night. The raids have been by far the most extensive since the Gulf War, involving hundreds of cruise missiles targeted on dozens of sites.

The Iraqi dictator said that under no circumstances would he back down, despite the attacks on the most critical structures of his regime. "By God, we will not compromise," he said in a taped Iraqi television address. "A curse on the agents of Satan... We will fear nothing but God and we will not kneel except to the face of God."

It was the first time President Saddam had spoken to Iraqis since the bombing started three days ago.

Against a background of wailing air-raid sirens Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, said last night that Britain was a rat following behind the American elephant.

Mr Aziz hinted that United Nations weapons inspectors would not be allowed to return. He said Richard Butler, the head of Unscow, would never return to Iraq, and accused him of collusion with Washing-

ton. "There was co-ordination by the US government and Butler about the content of the report and the timing of the report," said Mr Aziz at a Baghdad news conference. "This is not a military conflict. This is a criminal aggression by the US and Britain."

Baghdad itself was calm but apprehensive yesterday. It was a Friday, a holiday, but the streets were empty away from the central markets. The mood of people is resigned, almost detached, believing that there is nothing they can do to affect the course of events. "They will hit us again and again and again, said one Iraqi, spreading his hands in despair."

Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) yesterday visited two Baghdad hospitals and saw 40 people wounded by the raids. The ICRC could not confirm any figures for the number of civilians killed or wounded in the raids, Iraq says that 25 people have died so far with 75 wounded. It says that homes, factories, a pharmacy college and a museum have been hit as well as other military targets. It also claims to have shot down 77 of the incoming cruise missiles.

Britain and America pledged to press on with the attacks, and claimed the air strikes were achieving their short-term goals. "I believe we are on course to achieve our military objectives," Tony Blair said last night. "There is no doubt we are significantly damaging Saddam Hussein's military capability and reducing... the threat that he poses to the region and to the world."

The Pentagon set out the most detailed list of targets so far, saying it had hit 11 sites linked to Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, five airfields and 19 security facilities.

Judging by the US briefing and a list of targets put out by the Iraqi opposition, there has been a particular concentration on the Special Republican Guard, one of the main military props to the regime. It is detailed to guard the leadership, its

homes and offices and maintain internal security.

The US has also crippled a key oil installation near Basra that was used for oil exports, hitting Iraq's ability to export oil to pay for food, William Cohen, the US Defense Secretary, said. "With respect to the facility in Basra, that is a very limited attack on a facility that provides for the illegal shipment of oil."

Iraq is also allowed to export oil legally under a UN scheme, and the damage to the Basra installation will severely set back economic recovery.

Underscoring their desire to remove President Saddam, US aircraft were also reported to have dropped propaganda leaflets in the mainly Shia areas of southern Iraq, where an up-

rising in 1991 was brutally put down after the Gulf War.

RAF Tornados were in action once again last night. On Thursday night, they attacked a base where Iraq was alleged to be developing pilotless aircraft to drop chemical and biological weapons. The Ministry of Defence released film of a Tornado destroying a hangar, hitting a surface-to-air missile site and attacking a radio mast.

According to reports from the region, the aerial campaign is being managed from a joint operations command room at a Saudi airbase south of Riyadh, though Saudi Arabia has not permitted its bases to be used for actual sorties.

More cruise missiles have been launched than during the

act to counter a real and present danger from a tyrant who has never hesitated to use whatever weapons come to hand," he wrote.

Echoing his statement to the Commons, Mr Blair said President Saddam had never kept his word. "The risk he poses is real, not theoretical. What happens once the military action is over depends at least as much on Saddam as it does on us. I hope he will finally come to his senses."

The effort to hold together Western support for the military action was reinforced in tele-

phone calls by Mr Blair to Gerhard Schröder, the German Chancellor, Jacques Chirac, the French President, Massimo D'Alema, the Italian Prime Minister, and Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, according to Downing Street. He was also due to speak to Crown Prince Abdullah, first Deputy Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia.

Mr Blair prepared public opinion for casualties. Saying the decision to attack had been with great regret, he added: "There will be casualties in Iraq, despite all our efforts."

INSIDE

Moscow fury sparks new cold war page 2

Baghdad settles into war routine page 3

Military targets: now it's personal page 4

'End Iraq's agony' - Letters Review, page 2

Gavin Esler; leading article Review, page 3

Hillary appeals as impeachment starts

SCORNING THE pleas of Democrats, the Republican majority in the House of Representatives yesterday rolled through the opening of the debate to impeach President Bill Clinton, a confrontation they have lusted after for months.

Republicans, whose mood had already been soured by Democrats' attempts to postpone the debate, arrived baying for blood and in no mood for compromise. They booed and yelled as Democrats tried for a new delay, citing the national interest, and calmed down only for the formal reading of the four articles of impeachment - perjury (twice), obstruction of justice and abuse of power - before the debate.

The mood of the House, alternately grave and raucous, abject and combative, seemed to guarantee a vote for impeachment today.

The White House kept an insouciant distance, but looked powerless to halt the momentum for impeachment.

The only intervention was the half-hearted deployment of its weapon of last resort, the First Lady, Hillary Clinton. She broke a week of silence to call for "reconciliation" to end the "divisiveness" in the country.

Asked after an unrelated event to comment on the course of impeachment, she said: "The vast majority of Americans share my approval and pride in the job the President has been doing for our country."

"I think in this holiday season, as we celebrate Christmas and Hanukkah and Ramadan, it's time for reflection and reconciliation among people, we... ought to practise reconciliation and we ought to bring our country together. We ought to end divisiveness, because we can do so much more together."

Mrs Clinton's apparently unscripted remarks were cooler and less personal than some she has offered in support of her

background, a television message if ever there was one, that the White House would let the constitutional process take its course, but was fighting on.

Mr Clinton was conducting himself as he has done since the start of the impeachment crisis, attending to matters of state - now dominated by the assault on Iraq - and staying above the fray.

The previous day the White House spokesman had said Congress had its priorities and the White House had its, and they were different. However, it also let slip that the political truce that had prevailed during the day-long postponement of the debate was at an end. And



Hillary Clinton breaking her silence yesterday

INSIDE THIS SECTION

Lawrence inquiry
The Stephen Lawrence inquiry draft report criticises Met police Home P7

Season of Ill will
No peace for Kosovo as tit-for-tat killings bring terror to the community Foreign P16

Earth tremors in Italy
Earthquake victims are still out in the cold Foreign P17

Consumers hold back
Retailers are struggling with poor pre-Christmas trading Business P20

On the attack
The beleaguered FA has come out fighting Sport P32

Sue Arnold
Tell me more: the charm of the round-robin letter Comment P5

Gavin Esler
Clinton and his political enemies are all engaged in risky actions Comment P3

Saturday Essay
Christmas science: an explanation for the Star of Bethlehem Comment P7

Gavin Bryars
An interview with our leading composer Arts P12

Anna Pavord
Floral decorations: deck your halls with amaryllis Gardening P18

Seasonal Santa Fe
Going native American in New Mexico Travel P22

9 770951 946663

TODAY'S TELEVISION
PAGE 32

HOME 2-15, FOREIGN 16-19, BUSINESS 20-22, SPORT 23-32, CROSSWORD 32, WEATHER 2

LETTERS 2, LEADERS 3, COMMENT 4-6, FEATURES 8-9, OBITUARIES 10-11, ARTS 12-13, BOOKS 14-16, COUNTRY 17, GARDEN 18-19

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RUSSIAN PROTEST

Russian ultra-nationalists, one with a portrait of President Saddam Hussein, protest at the American embassy in Moscow yesterday **EP**

cials said that negotiations with Washington over a \$850 million food-aid deal were proceeding as planned, despite the bombing raids. It seems that Russia is prepared to bark at the hand that feeds it, but it is unlikely to bite it.

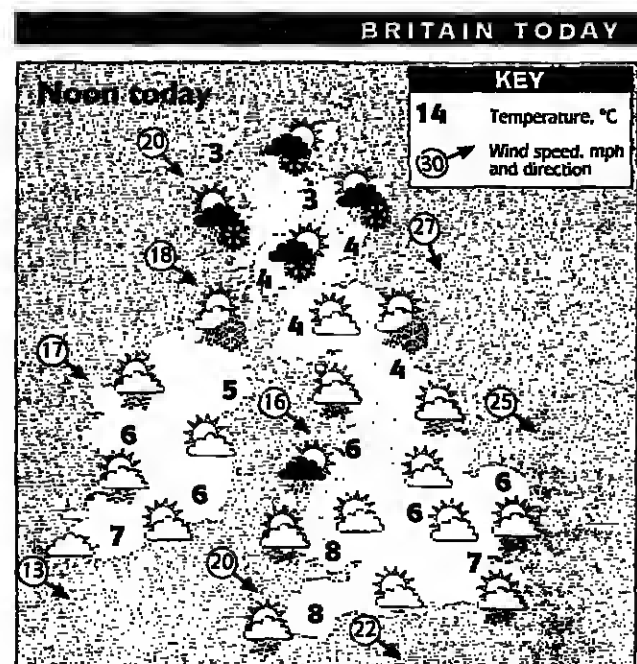
need for a common European foreign policy.

Europe, he said, was embarking on a "very difficult discussion process - one, though, he was too diplomatic to say, that will have been made much easier by Britain once again throwing in its lot with the US instantly and instinctively.

Its approach can only cast doubt on the sincerity of Mr Blair's recent call for a separate European defence identity, a concept embraced after some hesitation by Paris at the St Malo summit, but which already appears to have been consigned to the bin.

ARAB REACTION

Watan, wrote that he wished to see the bodies of Saddam Hussein, his wife and sons "hanging naked from street lamps all over Baghdad". One wonders how the British embassy in Kuwait rendered that sentiment into English.



SW & NW Scotland, Glasgow, W Isles: Cold with sleet and snow showers, the showers becoming prolonged. A fresh north-west wind. Max temp 3-5C (37-41F).
SE & NE Scotland, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, N Isles: Sleet and snow showers likely but it will be drier and brighter in the south. A fresh to strong north-westerly wind. Max temp 2-5C (36-41F).

N Ireland: Wintry showers breaking out, but there will be a few bright spells, especially in the south-east. A fresh north-westerly wind. Max temp 4-6C (39-43F).

OUTLOOK

It will turn even colder tomorrow as further wintry showers affect the east coast. In the west it will be generally dry and bright. After a widespread overnight frost, Monday will see rain moving eastwards across the country. This will be preceded by snow over the mountains and hills.

[illegible]

LIGHTING UP

Belfast	3.58pm	to	8.43am
Birmingham	3.54pm	to	8.15am
Bristol	4.03pm	to	8.13am
Glasgow	3.43pm	to	8.45am
London	3.53pm	to	8.08am
Manchester	3.50pm	to	8.22am
Newcastle	3.39pm	to	8.29am

	AM	HT	PM	H
Annsmouth	7.15	12.7	7.32	12.4
Cork	5.37	4.4	5.54	4.3
Donport	6.11	6.1	6.19	6.1
Dwyer	11.09	6.4	11.29	6.4
Dun Laoghaire	11.36	4.0	11.59	3.8
Falmouth	5.21	5.3	5.42	5.1
Greenock	12.24	3.1	12.55	3.0
Haverhill			12.02	3.5
Holyhead	10.27	9.5	10.46	9.5
King (Albert Dist)	6.24	8.2	6.37	8.5
Kings Lynn	6.28	6.3	6.42	6.5
Larne	7.46	5.3	7.58	5.2
Liverpool	11.20	9.2	11.38	9.0
Milford Haven	6.18	6.6	6.35	6.6
Monmouth	5.05	6.7	5.26	6.6
Newquay	1.56	2.0	2.19	1.5
Penzance	11.52	11.7	11.57	11.4
Porthell	8.11	4.7	8.27	4.6
Scarborough	4.12	3.5	4.26	3.6
Wick	11.27	3.5	11.51	3.4

Height measured in metres

AIR QUALITY		
Today's readings		
	NO ₂	SO ₂
London	Moderate	Good
S England	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C England	Good	Good
N England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good

SUN & MOON
 Sun rises: 08.03
 Sun sets: 15.53
 Moon rises: 08.03
 Moon sets: 16.47
 First Quarter Day 26

WEATHERLINE
For the latest forecasts dial 6837 5009
followed by the two digits for your area
Source: The Met. Office. Calls charged at

Map of the United Kingdom showing the number of deaths per minute (UK VAI) for each region. The map is divided into regions, each labeled with a number. A legend in the top right corner shows a box with the number 20 and a box with the number 25.

Region	Deaths per minute (UK VAI)
North East	25
North West	24
Yorkshire and the Humber	21
East of England	23
West Midlands	22
East Midlands	20
London	19
South East	18
South West	17
West of England	16
North of England	15
Central England	14
South of England	13
North of Scotland	12
Central Scotland	11
South of Scotland	10
North of Wales	09
Central Wales	08
South of Wales	07
North of Ireland	06
Central Ireland	05
South of Ireland	04
North of Northern Ireland	03
Central Northern Ireland	02
South of Northern Ireland	01

YESTERDAY

EXTREMES

Warmest: Isles of Scilly 12C (54F)
Coldest (day): Belfast 5C (41F)
Wettest: Snowdonia 0.79 ins
Sunniest: Elgin 7.0 hrs

For 24hrs to 2pm Friday

Sun	Rain	Max
hrs	in	°C °F

Abertillery	0	0.02	12	54
Aberystwyth	0	0.06	11	52
Alynwara	0	0.48	12	54
Belfast	0	0.10	12	54
Birmingham	0.2	0	10	50
Birmingham	0.2	0	10	50
Bristol	0	0	11	52
Buxton	3.2	0.01	9	48
Cardiff	0.6	0.01	12	54
Cardiff	0.6	0.01	12	54
Cromer	0.2	0	7	45
Darlington	2.7	0.03	13	55
Edinburgh	0	0.01	11	52
Edinburgh	0	0.01	11	52
Exeter	0.1	0	7	45
Exeter	0.1	0	7	45
Gloucester	6.1	0	9	48
Glasgow	0	0.28	13	55
Glasgow	0	0.28	13	55
Hastings	4.7	0	10	50
Hastings	4.7	0	10	50
Isle of Man	0.8	0	9	48
Isle of Man	0	0.04	12	54
Jersey	0	0.01	9	48
Jersey	0	0	7	45
Leeds	0	0	9	48
Leeds	4.7	0	13	55
Lerwick	0	0.11	12	54
Lerwick	0	0.11	12	54
Loughamilton	1.0	0	9	48

[illegible]

COME RAIN OR SHINE...

KEY

Isobars: air pressure in millibars

— 1024 — 992 — 1008 — 1016

— warm front — cold front — occluded front

Temperature ranges (from top left):

- 11-20°C
- 21-30°C
- 31-40°C

[illegible]

WORLD
ON TODAY

Low P

1008 1016

20° 40°

Low P moves south-east as Low P moves east.

YESTERDAY

Legend: mist; haze; sunny; showers; snow.

For available figure, moon local time.

[illegible]

Wave o across

ARAB RE

ALL ACROSS the Arab world yesterday, British diplomats were sending back to London reports which totally contradicted what Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, has been telling the British people. In their summaries and press digests, ambassadors have been telling the Foreign Office of the rage, fury, frustration and humiliation of the Arabs in the face of the attack on Iraq.

Mr Cook maintains that

while reaction is "muted". Most Arab regimes support the bombardment. But in Cairo, the ambassador will have told his masters of demonstrations at the al-Azhar mosque where the imam told his people to support Iraq or "be struck by God's condemnation" and where hundreds demanded a holy war. The British embassy in Abu Dhabi will have recorded the sword of the official spokesman of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al-

Nahyan, the ruler of the United Arab Emirates, who referred to the "terrible operation" as "beyond comprehension and ... unacceptable."

Our diplomats in Damascus will have sent back accounts of remarks by Abdul-Kader Qadouri, speaker of the Syrian parliament, who said: "We condemn and denounce this attack and call on the international community to halt it."

In Qatar, one of the only Arab Gulf states to open relations with Israel, the daily newspaper *Asharq* said that American missiles were "targeting unarmed Iraqi civilians, showing that human conscience is dead. The missiles,

f anger Gulf

ACTION

BY ROBERT FISK
in Beirut

loaded with hatred, are ruthlessly bringing death and devastation to a dear Arab nation".

In Beirut - diplomats will have read the editorial in the daily *us-Safir*, whose columnist Mohamed Mashmoushi suggested that British and American talk about "respect for the sensitivities of Muslims" at Ramadan was a

Most newspaper editorials in the Arab world assumed that the Anglo-American attack meant the end of all future UN weapons inspections. Ghassan Thani, the joint owner of *al-Nahar* newspaper in Beirut, lamented the weakness of the Arab world in confronting the bombardment of Iraq.

"If we want to dream," he wrote, "there's nothing to prevent Syria."

Jordan and Egypt - Washington's principle Arab "friends" in the Middle East - sent state security police onto the streets of Amman and Cairo to prevent demonstrations. Only in Kuwait could one hear the sort of anger Mr. Cook would have us believe represents the Arab world.

Fouad al-Hashem, a columnist for the Kuwaiti daily *al-Wakeel*, wrote that he wished to see the bodies of Saddam Hussein, his wife and sons "hanging naked from street lamps all over Baghdad". One wonders whether the British embassy in Kuwait rendered that sentiment into English.

The missiles come so close you feel the warm gust of air on your face

BAGHDAD ASSAULT

By Patrick Cockburn in Baghdad

BY DAYLIGHT they looked like large black aerial torpedoes moving surprisingly slowly towards their target. By night they are invisible until they explode. They are the cruise missiles which have been falling on Baghdad for two days, sending fire into the air.

Already war in Iraq has its routine. The first warning of an attack is the howling of the air-raid sirens. The United States and Britain say they have wiped out Iraq's air defences, but some radar must still be operating because the sirens are usually right in predicting an attack.

The streets start emptying in the Iraqi capital soon after dark. This is a city where life is additionally nocturnal. Shops and restaurants stay open late. No more. Even in districts like the mixed Christian-Muslim neighbourhood of Karada, which is known for its night life, most shops put up their metal gratings at an early hour. There are still cars in the streets but they drive fast and ignore traffic lights.

Some minutes after the sirens sound come the first specks of anti-aircraft fire. Red balls of fire drift upwards slowly. Then the anti-aircraft shells burst into flecks of white light. There is little tracer fire, though occasionally you hear the rattle of a Kalashnikov machine-gun, as if an Iraqi was firing into the air in frustration. It is not like the V1s which hit London in 1944. There is no sound from the incoming rockets. The anti-aircraft fire weaves uncertainly across the sky, as if the gunners were unsure of their aim, and a ball of light expands on the horizon as the missile strikes.

For a moment the tall buildings in Baghdad are illuminated by the flash. Then, depending on the distance from the explosion, there is the crash of the rocket's detonation. When the missile strike is close, you feel the warm gust of air from the blast.

This is a television war. The camera crews, gathered on the roof of the Iraqi Ministry of Information on the banks of the river Tigris, provide a graphic but somewhat deceptive view of what is happening. Their night vision equipment, amplifying ambient light, makes the explosions look even more spectacular than they really are.

Most of the missiles are falling on the outskirts of the city. But the centre is also being



An woman making her way through the remains of her relative's villa in the Al Adel district of Baghdad yesterday. The house was hit during Thursday's air strike AFP

hit. One fell on the Military Industry Ministry near the Al-Rashid hotel.

The "surgical strikes" are not as surgical as the Ministry of Defence in London, or the Pentagon in Washington, make them sound. One missile landed on a substantial house in the Hail Adel district, sending shrapnel into the head of Dr Jallim Geylan, a wealthy engineer.

We saw him later in hospital wrapped in a green blanket. His sister was sitting beside him. She said his wife and children were in another hospital. Dr Geylan's house is in a residential district, so it is difficult to see what the bombers were aiming at. It seemed more likely that the rocket was off course, or had been shot down.

The misery caused by the missile attack is not only a matter of the dead and wounded. In the middle of the night we went to see the Baghdad Teaching Hospital, a vast complex. It had not suffered a direct hit but an explosion had

blown in the windows and brought down some ceilings. Treading gingerly through the shattered glass windows on the ground floor we went downstairs into a warren of grimy halls and passages under the hospital which serves as its bomb shelter. Since the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, all big buildings in Baghdad have shelters.

One man with a bloody bandage and a stump for a right leg was being moved downstairs by doctors. In Iraq, a member of a patient's family often stays with him in hospital. In a large tunnel deep underground women in traditional black cloaks were crouched around bedside family members, while the hospital staff manhandled big, black bottles of oxygen into the shelter. It had not been used for some time and water dripped from the ceiling and mixed with blood on the floor.

Fridays are holidays in this Muslim country so most shops were shut. The vast market in Shurjah in the centre of the city

gave an effect of normality. Everything was on sale - spring clothes, rice, carpets, radios and second-hand pieces of equipment. In one part of the market, people were buying and selling songbirds, which the Iraqis often have in their homes. In another street, traders sold dogs as pets or for guard duty.

But elsewhere in Baghdad it was clear that Iraqis thought it safer to stay at home, even though there have been no raids in the middle of the day. In a normally busy restaurant on Saadoun Street there were a few farmers wearing the head dresses and traditional robes of the Iraqi countryside. Only two other tables were occupied. "What do you expect?" said the proprietor in despair.

In Soukh al Sori, the book market, intellectuals come on Friday to sell old volumes for a few dinars. The books are often remains of a university career in Britain.

An Iraqi acquaintance, walking in the market said: "Things could be worse. We are used to

being hit by rockets. Saddam will be stronger after this."

This is not quite a true reflection of what Iraqis generally feel. Another Iraqi said: "Iraqis fear that a game is being played over which they have no interest. They feel they are always the victims, whether it is sanctions or bombs. The forfeit is horrible. Young and old people feel frightened, but in a way we are used to it. Just staying alive takes a lot of effort here."

It is also not quite as dan-

gerous or devastating as the Gulf War. The allies destroyed the city's power station on the first flight, dropping metallic strands on the power lines to fuse the wires. The telecommunication towers disappeared entirely and the telephones ceased to work. Refineries were destroyed and there was no petrol in a country which has some of the biggest oil reserves in the world.

None of this has happened this time. There were queues at

petrol stations in the first day of the bombing but these have largely disappeared. The government has not introduced petrol rations. Curiously the dinar has slipped in value only slightly against the dollar, indicating that Iraqi money-changers do not think this economy, crippled by eight years of sanctions, is finally going to collapse.

Nothing angers ordinary Iraqis more than to hear that they are not suffering from

real malnutrition because of international sanctions. Dr Al Baysuni, a scientist, said yesterday that he had just heard Tony Blair claim Iraq was a food exporter. "What do we export except a few dates?" he said with disgust.

But although the bombing is not as bad as 1990-1991, Iraq is weaker than it was. Malnutrition rates are close to those of impoverished Mali in Africa, according to United Nations humanitarian workers. The limited export of oil since 1996 has brought in more food but has not brought down the death rate among children because the infrastructure has collapsed. In much of the country clean water can no longer be pumped, so people drink straight from the rivers.

A problem for Britain and America is that they want at all costs to prevent pilots being captured by Iraq. Therefore they rely heavily on missiles rather than piloted aircraft. These look impressive on television and are effective against large, fixed targets. But these targets are not at the heart of the Iraqi government. So far, at least, the United States and Britain have been careful about what they hit. The fact that Baghdad is not suffering missile strikes during the daytime means that people are at home when most of the damage is done.

If daytime raids begin, the casualties will immediately go up. But the lesson of the Gulf War is that for all the vaunted accuracy of missiles in the use of allied fire power against a heavily inhabited city - Baghdad has 3.5 million people but there are 5.5 million in its metropolitan area - it usually ends in disaster. In 1991, the allies hit the Amariya shelter in the city, killing 400 people. Most of them were women and children.

Cruise missiles and "smart" bombs are an attempt to win a war on the cheap. The missiles themselves are expensive, but because they allow the US and Britain to attack without any casualties to their own side, they are politically cheap. The problem is that they are unlikely to achieve their aims.

'Iraq will be victorious... A curse on the agents of Satan'

SADDAM'S SPEECH

IN HIS five minute address to the nation on television yesterday, his first since the air strikes began, Saddam Hussein said that "By God we will not compromise or kneel" in the showdown with the United States and Britain.

"Continue your resistance and, by God's will, you will be victorious," he said. "You are representing justice and all the characteristics against injustice."

Dressed in field marshal's uniform, the President spoke of the air strikes that have killed at least 25 people and wounded another 75. "You, great Iraqi people, you have raised high the Iraqi flag and you have proved again that you are heroic," he said. "Continue your resistance, and the criminals are doomed. In the name of God, strike them."

"By God, we will not compromise or kneel in the face of injustice. We will not let evil triumph over virtue."

The President paid tribute to the Iraqi armed forces and the air defence troops.

The air defence forces were "Iraq's high wall in the face of barbarism," he said. "We stand against the barbaric way of those that have used our air-ports to launch an aggression against our people. A curse on the agents of Satan."



Tariq Aziz branded air strikes a 'criminal violation' and said they could not last

"Iraq will be victorious. God damns them. Shame will be their fate, those followers of Satan and evil. We will fear nothing but God and we will not kneel except to the face of God."

"Long live great Iraq, the great Arab nation and Palestine, and doomed are our enemies."

At a news conference in Baghdad, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, branded the air strikes a "criminal violation" and said he doubted

such an attack could be sustained for more than a few days. "This is not a military conflict. This is a criminal aggression by the US and Britain. It's a criminal violation of the charter of the United Nations."

He said President Bill Clinton and Tony Blair had used "lies and fabrications to justify a crime that cannot be justified."

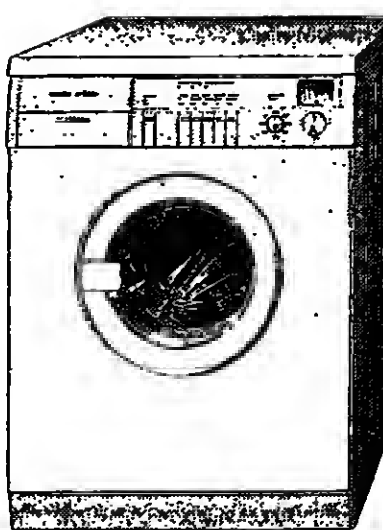
He added: "The reality is that the resources that they have assembled for this ag-

gression are limited, they are not the same resources that they assembled in the aggression of 1991."

"They cannot throw 200 missiles every day for a whole month. It may be one, two, three or four days but it will not go on, with these resources, for a very long period."

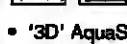
He said the decision to time the attacks close to the start of the holy month of Ramadan was "an insult to Arabs."

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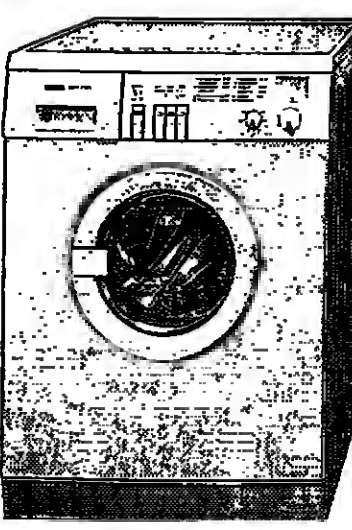


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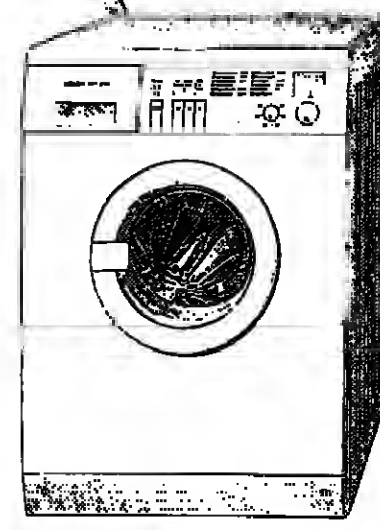
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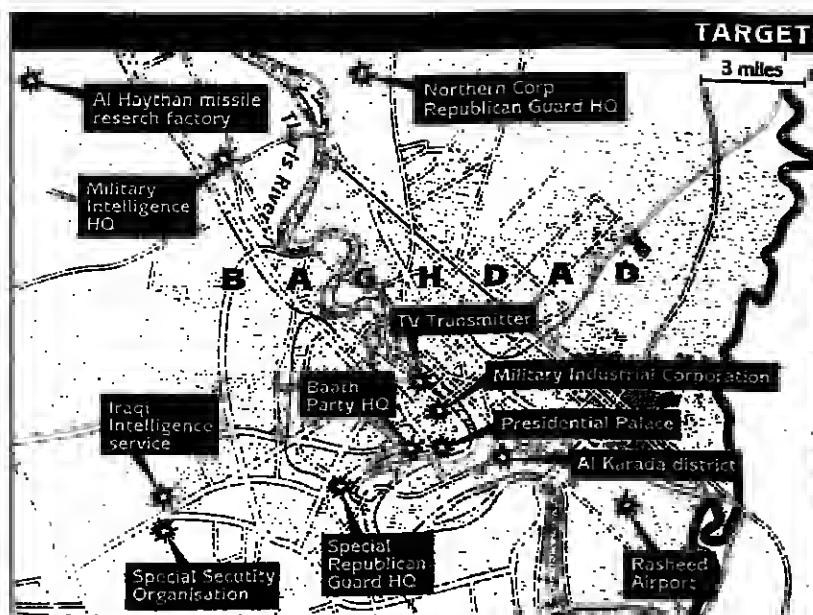
WFF 1201



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- Electronically controlled through Fuzzy Logic
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- Spin speed button for reducing spin speed
- Colour coded fascia for ease of use
- 16 wash programmes

Affordable Quality

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Bomb damage as reported by the opposition Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation:

Baghdad Headquarters of the Iraqi Intelligence Service, Mukhabarat, Home of Saddam's daughter Hala destroyed; main Presidential Palace complex hit; Headquarters of the Special Security Organisation, hit; Headquarters of Military Intelligence, heavily damaged; Headquarters of the Special Republican Guard and SRG bases in Amariya and Hal Al Jihad hit; Industrial City, near Baghdad, hit.

Rashid Airbase, attacked. Al Taji Camp (20 km north of Baghdad), 13 different targets attacked - among them several weapons facilities, units of the Republican Guard, and main repair shops of the Iraqi Army Armoured Corps. Baath Party Academy, Al Zeltoun Street damaged. Civilian target in Al Karada district hit. Weapons factories south, southwest and southeast (Mahmoudia and Al Yousefi) hit in second raid on Thursday. Rashidiya, main base of the Northern Corps of the Republican Guard. Weapons facilities also hit. Ten offices of the Mukhabarat secret police, around Baghdad hit. Al Hasouwa Camp (west of Baghdad) Republican Guard base and Al Suweira, main base of Republican Guard Southern Corps both hit. Northern Iraq Tikrit (Saddam's home city) Main grain silo destroyed. Al Bakr Airbase hit. Air defense facilities, radars and SAM missiles in Tikrit, Baiji and Samarra, destroyed. Jebel Makhoul (40 km north of Tikrit), site containing nuclear and chemical facilities, a headquarters of the Special Republican Guard, and palace of Saddam hit. Iraqi Army Tank Training Ground north of Tikrit hit. Mosul city. Al Gayar Airbase, Mirage aircraft base, hit. Headquarters of Fifth Corps of Iraqi Army in Al Salamiya district hit. Al-Haditha, HQ of the Seventh Division of the Iraqi Army hit. Al-Haditha, the HQ of the Baghdad Division of the Republican Guard hit. Aski Mosul containing military facilities hit. Western Iraq Al Walid Airbase (250 km NW of Baghdad) near Baghdad town and Tahrmoz Airbase near Habaniya were hit. Southern Iraq Basra oil refinery hit. Tallil Airfield hit by RAF.

Aim to destabilise Saddam's security.

DETAILED ANALYSIS of the West's targets in Iraq suggest Britain and America are no longer content to weaken Saddam's military capacity. Experts believe they are also trying to threaten his very regime.

The targeting of Saddam's daughter's house, the barracks of the Special Republican Guard and military intelligence headquarters reveal that Operation Desert Fox has become distinctly personal.

"The policy of Britain and America has undergone a sea-change," said Professor Paul Rogers, of Bradford University's department of peace studies. "It is no longer satisfied with trying to contain Saddam."

Information released yesterday by the Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation, the media arm of the opposition Iraqi National Congress, detailed the security and military targets across Iraq which had been hit in the first two nights of bombing.

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington.
ANDREW BUNCUMBE
AND JOHN DAVISON

by Britain and the US concentrated on airfields, radar sites and conventional military bases. Two key airfields - at Rashid, near Baghdad, and Mosul - were hit early, as were Republican Guard bases, armoured units and army headquarters.

This was all in the line with the West's repeatedly stated intention of the operation, namely to "degrade" Saddam's capacity to make "weapons of mass destruction" and to reduce the military threat he poses to his neighbours.

At a briefing yesterday, the Defence Secretary, George Robertson, repeated this line saying that failure to comply with UN resolutions will lead to continued attacks and tightening of sanctions. "The policy is based on a very simple, clear message. We are not going to go away," he said.

away," he said. "We have a clear long-term strategy. Until he complies fully, we will not withdraw the threat of further military action without warning."

But behind the soundbites, repeated at times like a mantra, there lurks a far more radical intention on the part of the West. Messed around repeatedly for seven years, taken to the brink too many times by the master of brinkmanship, it appears the West - or at least some members of the West - have had enough of Saddam Hussein.

The MoD was keen to stress yesterday that all of the locations attacked over the past three days were legitimate military targets.

General Sir Charles Guthrie, chief of the defence staff, stressed that all the targets had been selected with great care. "We have had eight years since the Gulf War to identify the key targets," he said. "Our aim is not to destroy Saddam's forces

THE MILITARY ANALYSIS

but to cripple them by hitting these key points."

But analysis of the sites shows that is not the full picture.

Tim Trevan, a former spokesman for Unesco, the UN commission whose job has been to uncover Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, said: "The sites chosen are very apposite to Britain and America's aims. They have chosen the airbases and military headquarters to reduce Saddam's capacity to wage war, but there have also been other targets."

He pointed out that the coalition had also bombed the house of Saddam's daughter, Hala. This was intended to psychologically damage him, in much the same way as the 1985 bombers of Libya targeted Colonel Gaddafi's daughter.

Likewise the attacks on the barracks of the Special Republican Guard and the head-

quarters of the Special Security Organisation - both organisations key to Saddam's personal security - were designed to undermine his safety both psychologically and in reality, he said.

According to the IBC, the headquarters of the Iraqi Intelligence Service was also hit. The IIS, or Mukhabarat, is probably the most important of Iraq's intelligence organisations, spying and mounting covert operations abroad, and maintaining a guard against subversion at home. Ten other offices of the Mukhabarat were hit across the city.

The US also hit the Special Security Service, or Al Ann Al Khas, whose primary duty is the close protection of key members of the Baath party.

The heaviest damage, however, appears to have been done to facilities of the Special

Republican Guard. This unit, some 25,000 strong, holds the keys to the regime.

As well as functioning as an elite combat unit, it is responsible for guarding the President, his family and their homes, key strategic locations, and maintaining security.

Indeed, if the IBC reports are correct, then perhaps a dozen different locations of the SRG have been hit. They were, apparently, targeted in the first wave of strikes, on Wednesday, indicating that the US hoped to have caught the SRG unaware, with its members sleeping.

Amongst units that seem to have been hit from the First Brigade, which is largely charged with security duties, are the First Battalion, which escorts Saddam's motorcades and operates 150 Mercedes, the Second Battalion, which runs protection for presidential sites, and the Seventh Battalion, a plain-clothes unit which protects officials' residences.

Outside Baghdad, the US also hit SRG sites in the presidential area in Mosul, in northern Iraq, and at Jebel Mak-Hool, a key presidential site near the central Iraqi town of Samarra.

Slowly but surely, the props which have supported Saddam are being bombed away.

"The West has had three options. It could either let Saddam carry on regardless, it could try a policy of containment or it could be seen to try to get rid of him," said Mr Trevan. "It would seem that Britain is now moving towards the third option."

He said that with hindsight, the West's policy of trying to deal with Saddam through the weapons inspectors was flawed from the start.

"The policy was based on the notion that through sanctions and the threat of military action, Saddam would be punished if he did not comply," he said. "I think everyone underestimated just how obstinate he was going

to be. After five years of living with sanctions there was no way these were going to be effective. He was not in danger as long as the people he relied on to keep power did not go without."

"It basically means they have given up on the weapons inspectors and are now going to deal with Saddam through sanctions and the use of military force whenever he gets too powerful."

If America and Britain are trying to get rid of Saddam, it is a policy which brings its own dangers. Not only would it threaten huge instability in an unstable area, but Saddam would not go willingly.

"If the West is trying to bring down Saddam it is an extremely dangerous option," said Professor Rogers. "This regime is all about staying in power. If there came a time when he was threatened it might be the occasion when he would use those biological weapons."

Heath supports Labour rebels

DISSIDENTS

SIR EDWARD HEATH joined Labour dissidents yesterday in condemning the bombing of Iraq as "dubious" and criticised Tony Blair for giving unequivocal support to President Bill Clinton for the offensive.

It came as Mr Blair faced mounting criticism of the bombing. The Christmas recess robbed the rebels of any chance to mobilise their forces at Westminster against the bombing, but they claimed that more Labour MPs would be under pressure to come out against the attacks this weekend from their constituency parties.

George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, signalled a continued strategy of bombing - replacing the use of UN inspectors - to destroy Saddam Hussein's military might, including the Republican Guard,

BY COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

which has helped sustained him in power. "We are not going to go away," he said.

But there could be growing dissent, if the bombing is prolonged. Even some supporters said there would be a shift in opinion, if there were casualties among British forces in the Gulf.

Sir Edward's intervention on BBC radio is likely to make Labour MPs more uncomfortable. The former Tory prime minister criticised the British and American leaders for failing to set out clear objectives for the use of force, and made it clear that he was against giving the US uncritical support.

"I believe we should always keep separate on these things.

The whole setting of this enterprise has been so dubious, especially when the President of the United States has got his own domestic problems. We are going to see them going on together," he said.

Sir Edward, who met President Saddam during the Gulf War to release hostages, said the aims had not been clearly defined. "How long are they going to keep on? They don't even know whether they are going to go on through Ramadan. Are they aiming at de-throning Saddam Hussein - if so, what happens if they don't? All these are open questions."

Left-wing Labour opponents of the bombing in Iraq were still seething about the whips' play which stopped them voting against the Government on Thursday night following a



Tony Blair in Downing Street yesterday giving a statement on the bombings

Commons debate. Tam Dalyell said the refusal to put tellers on for a late-night vote had infuriated Labour MPs who had wanted to register a protest against the Government. "I don't think matters of peace and war are matters for parliamentary games or wheezes," he said.

But Mr Dalyell targeted the "Blair Babes" for special criticism. His remarks are certain to upset some of the women MPs who have supported the action, but Mr Dalyell said it underlined the anger he felt at the way the Government had handled the Commons.

"If anybody thinks that

women are more compassionate than men when they are near politics, they had better think again," he said. "With the honourable exception of Alice Mahon (Labour MP for Halifax), who cannot sensibly be described as a Blair Babe, what are they doing? I think they don't want to make up their minds."

Campbell warns on fake pictures

MEDIA

GOVERNMENT fears that the television coverage of bombing Iraq could turn public opinion against the war were highlighted yesterday with a Downing Street warning to "place a health warning" on some of the coverage from Baghdad.

As reports came in of an Iraqi hospital being damaged by a blast from a cruise missile in Baghdad, the Prime Minister's official spokesman urged journalists not to be taken in by the Iraqi propaganda machine.

He claimed Western television film crews had been duped in the Gulf War over the highly publicised bombing of a Iraqi plant making baby's milk. The Downing Street spokesman said on another occasion, workers had been seen shortly before the television crews arrived, removing slates from another building to make it appear it had been hit.

"There should be a health warning attached to what the

BY COLIN BROWN
AND PAUL MCCANN

media is allowed to see," he said. The Downing Street spokesman said that much of the bombing was being directed at military targets outside Baghdad, believed to include the barracks of the Republican Guard. This was not being shown because film crews were being tightly controlled.

Television reporters in the Iraqi capital are being escorted to sites chosen by Saddam Hussein's regime. So far these have been sites the Iraqis claim are civilian buildings.

Most pictures are coming from crews on the roof of the Information Ministry. Some other pictures are also coming from the roof of the Al-Rashid Hotel where most journalists are staying. When the bombing begins, all foreign journalists have been ordered to stay either at the ministry or their hotel.

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Congress torn by bitter wrangle

IN THE HOUSE

AS THE United States carried out a third night of air strikes on Iraq and senior Democrats rallied against the conjunction of military action and high politics, the House of Representatives convened to debate the removal from office of the President of the United States and the Commander in Chief of its armed forces, William Jefferson Clinton.

It was only the second time in US history that the House had weighed the impeachment of the President, but the sense of history lost out to a sense of indignation.

The atmosphere in the House chamber was raucous and bad-tempered, more reminiscent of Britain's noisy and combative House of Commons than the drawing-room style of the US House of Representatives. As soon as the formalities – the oath of allegiance and the opening prayer – were completed the Democrats ventured a resolution of adjournment on the grounds that discussion of impeachment was inappropriate at such a time.

They also ventured, half-heartedly, a motion of censure to replace the impeachment, but they failed on both counts, and the House reading clerk, Paul Hays, opened the historic debate with a ringing rehearsal of the articles of impeachment: the four charges – two of perjury, one of obstructing justice and one of abuse of power – on which Bill Clinton stands accused.

Anticipating, perhaps, what was to come, the chairman for the debate, Ray LeHood, laid down the rules of civility and

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

seemly conduct. But his warning fell on deaf – or reluctant – ears. The debate that followed descended rapidly into a jumble of fearsome charges, lofty rhetoric, childish point-scoring and remembered slights.

Republicans harked back to Richard Nixon, the president who resigned rather than lose an impeachment vote in the House. For the Democrats, the leitmotif was "unfairness", the unfairness which had impelled the Republicans to reschedule the debate so soon, the unfairness of the charges against the President, the unfairness of threatening to impeach a president who enjoyed the confidence and support of "the people".

But the debate was opened with appropriate gravitas by Henry Hyde, the patrician chairman of the House judiciary committee, who had chaired the six weeks of impeachment hearings and overseen the formulation of the charges. Citing Benjamin Franklin and the Magna Carta, and sprinkling his rhetoric with an almost Clinton-like populism, Mr Hyde noted that the White House had hardly contested the accusations against the President. "They've admitted, in fact, that he did it, but question whether it rises to the level of high crimes and misdemeanours. It's a 'so what?' defence."

Referring to the volumes of evidence supplied by the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, in the Monica Lewinsky case, Mr Hyde said: "We have



President Bill Clinton with his wife, Hillary; Henry Hyde, chairman of the House judiciary committee (top right), and Dick Gephardt, leader of the minority Democrats AP

the facts; we have them under oath; we have Ms Lewinsky's heavily corroborated evidence." The rule of law, he said, "is one of the great achievements of our history... Law, not brute force, is the arbiter of our public destiny... For anyone to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father."

And in a calculated allusion to Mr Clinton's widely praised talent as a politician and his continuing popularity, Mr Hyde

stressed: "No man, no matter how gifted a manipulator of opinion, can be above the law." Paraphrasing the first and central theme of his committee's report to Congress, the argument that the President, as chief executive, has a paramount duty to uphold the law of the land, Mr Hyde noted the historic significance of the debate (and the one, perhaps, for which yesterday's proceedings will be remembered).

"We are in the process of set-

ting the parameters of permissible presidential conduct," he said, and went on: "We cannot have one law for the ruler and another for the ruled. If that understanding is lost, the American experiment – and the freedom it guarantees – is lost."

Responding to Mr Hyde was the firebrand orator, Dick Gephardt, leader of the minority Democrats, who had led their pleas for the debate to be postponed until the mili-

tary engagement with Iraq was at an end.

But Mr Gephardt was not his aggressive self. He adopted a quiet, importunate mode, calling – almost wistfully – for the House to observe "certain values: trust, fairness, forgiveness... and for 'politics of respect and decency'". The President, he said, was accused of "abuse of power". "We have an obligation not to abuse our power."

For his models, he took the

Prophet Isaiah and the Gettysburg Address of Abraham Lincoln: "In your effort to uphold the Constitution," he chided, "you are trampling the Constitution." And he closed: "Let fairness reign."

Fairness, at least as Mr Gephardt would define it, however, was far from the thoughts of many honourable members. They shuffled and they barracked, they cheered and they booed. Time and again, the chairman intervened to tell

them to stop interrupting and stay in their seats, but the effects were short-lived, and battle was rejoined.

A vote – that President Clinton should stand trial in the Senate – was a foregone conclusion, foreshadowed in the defeat of Democrats' attempts to have the debate postponed. The only question was when: when would Bill Clinton follow Andrew Johnson, impeached for sacking his war secretary in 1868, into the history books?

I strayed too, Republican leader is forced to admit

SLEAZE

WHEN THE longer-term history of Bill Clinton's impeachment is written, the name of Bob Livingston will be only a footnote. Yesterday, however, as the House of Representatives convened to debate the past and future of President Clinton, it loomed large, casting an additional shadow of sleaze over a debate whose genesis was sexual dalliance.

Hours before the debate was due to open, the news had spread around Washington that Mr Livingston, 55, elected last month to succeed Newt Gingrich as Speaker of the House, had admitted marital infidelity. "During my 33-year marriage to my wife, Bonnie, I have on occasion strayed from my marriage, and doing so nearly cost me my marriage and family," he said in a statement.

It came as the twice-weekly congressional newspaper, *Roll Call*, was going to press.

The paper had posted a report on its website exposing the Speaker-elect's indiscretions and Mr Livingston had made clear his admission had been

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

prompted by that revelation: "There are individuals working with the media who are investigating my personal background in an effort to find indiscretions which may be exploitable against me and my party on the eve of the upcoming historic vote on impeachment."

He drew a distinction between his conduct and that of Mr Clinton with the White House trainee Monica Lewinsky, saying: "I want to assure everyone that these indiscretions were not with employees on my staff and I have never been asked to testify under oath about them," he said.

He insisted he would not resign or change his stance on impeachment.

He then appeared before a packed party meeting, where he repeated his admission to a standing ovation.

The corridors of the Capitol were alive with Republicans who claimed to see the hand of



Bob Livingston: 'I have occasionally strayed'

the White House behind the Speaker-elect's admission, and repeated their cries of "sexual McCarthyism". Mr Livingston was the fourth Republican to be accused of sexual misconduct since the independent prosecutor's report on the Clinton-Lewinsky affair was passed to the House, and the answer to the question "Who benefits from such allegations?" was clear.

Similar accusations were

made against Henry Hyde, chairman of the judiciary committee, before it opened impeachment hearings. Mr Hyde, 74, was alerted to a report in the pro-Clinton Internet magazine *Salon* about a 30-year-old affair with a married woman which had ended her marriage. In admitting it, he dismissed it as a "youthful indiscretion" (he was in his forties at the time). He tendered his resignation to the judiciary committee but it was turned down.

The White House denied involvement in the Livingston allegations, as it had denied having anything to do with the others. But they undoubtedly had an effect in focusing attention back on the issue of sexual misconduct and away from the legal and constitutional issues.

They made it more difficult for Republicans, as a party, to take the moral high ground against Mr Clinton, and they may have discouraged representatives with a "past" from expressing themselves too forcefully against Mr Clinton – or speaking at all. That, at least, was the Republican view.

Perjury a matter of semantics

LEGAL ARGUMENTS

IF THERE was a perfect issue on which to wage the climactic battle of the Clinton presidency, this is it: not a matter of high policy, not an act of egregious criminality, not even a foreign war. Just a maddening, legalistic quibble.

No president in US history – and few lawyers for that matter – can match Bill Clinton for his adeptness at semantics, his ability to leave himself verbal bolt holes invisible to the naked eye. Not for nothing has he been known from his old Kansas days as Slick Willie.

But if the House does

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

impeach him on two counts of perjury and send him for trial in the Senate, even he will be pressed to square the circle.

Perjury to the layman is pretty straightforward. It is defined as "knowingly making a false statement about material facts while under oath."

Twice in the Lewinsky affair he has given evidence under oath, and twice he has told what any normal human being would consider whoppers.

Not, however, William Jefferson Clinton.

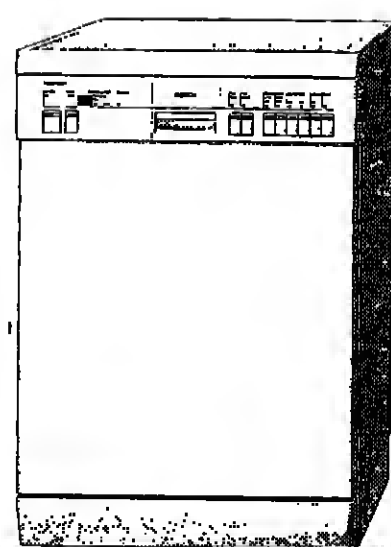
Did he have "sexual relations" with the said Monica? Depends what you mean by sexual relations. For Mr Clinton (and a few dusty dictionaries) "sexual relations" means "sexual intercourse." Anything short of that, including oral sex, doesn't count.

But what if he touched Monica's breast? That is what she says but, the President points out, only she says so. And that ain't perjury, his lawyers contend, just an honest disagreement among friends. Ah but was he ever alone with Monica? Can't remember, says Bill –

and his lawyers leap to point out that therefore he has never testified he was never alone with her. Of course, saying you don't remember something when you do is perjury. But trying proving that one in court.

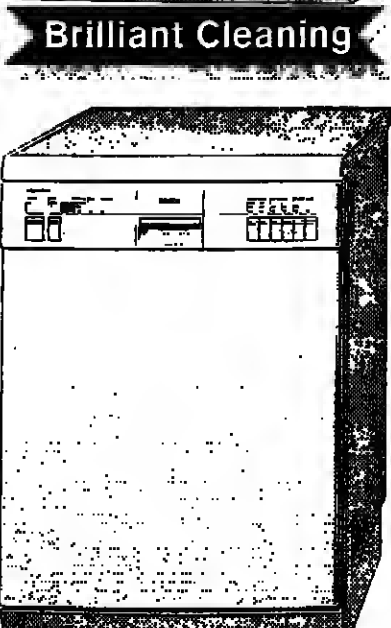
And so it goes on: over the intern; over the date of his last meeting with Ms Lewinsky, and whether or not they discussed the subpoena she faced. "I don't know," Mr Clinton said. Waste not pity on the President certainly – but spare a thought for the Senate. It's got to pick a way through the fog.

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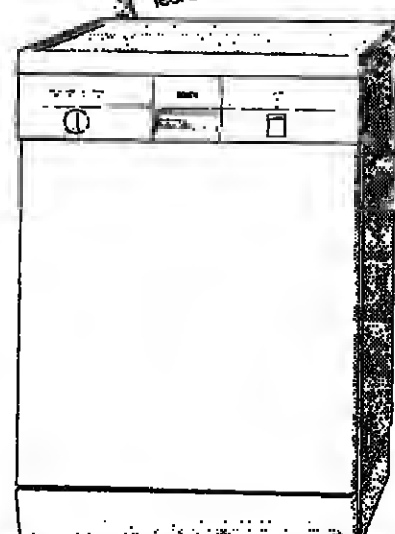
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IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

'I was twelve and I was admiring the breasts of the girls in school and trying to figure out a way to get my hands on them'

Thomas Lynch on the connection between love and sex and nativity

THE BEST-WRITTEN SUNDAY PAPER IN BRITAIN, FEATURING PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE, RUTH PADEL, DEAR ANNIE, JEREMY CLARKE, WALLACE ARNOLD, GILBERT ADAIR, TIM DOWLING, JOAN SMITH, MICHAEL BYWATER, JAN MORRIS, KATE FIGES, DAVID THOMSON AND CAPTAIN MOONLIGHT

First Ulster terrorists hand in guns

SHOWERS OF sparks flew into the air in a Belfast warehouse yesterday as observers witnessed a scene many never believed they would see: the sight of voluntarily decommissioned terrorist guns being sawn into pieces.

The destruction of a handful of weapons given up by a fringe loyalist group was the second important move of the day, for at 4am yesterday beary-eyed Unionist and nationalist politicians had announced agreement on the shape of a new Northern Ireland administration.

Both developments have their limitations for the group involved, the Loyalist Volunteer Force, is one of the smaller underground armies, while the political advance has left the core central issue of decommissioning untouched.

But both were, none the less, hugely welcome to the British and Irish governments, after months of seemingly interminable wrangling. The politicians will now go off on their Christmas break with a sense of achievement at having broken the recent stalemate.

The first-ever act of voluntary decommissioning took place after police provided an escort for a car travelling from the LVF's Portadown stronghold to Belfast. The vehicle carried eight or nine guns, detonators and blast bombs.

In keeping with the legislation aimed at facilitating decommissioning, the weapons were not checked for fingerprints or subjected to forensic science tests before their destruction.

Paradoxically, the LVF has in recent years been one of the most violent groups, and one of the most opposed to the peace

By DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

process. It was founded by Billy Wright, known as King Rat, who was assassinated by republicans a year ago. In the 12 months up until April of this year the group killed 13 people including 11 Catholic civilians, a Protestant who was drinking in a Catholic bar, and one of its own members whom it suspected of being an informer. Most of the victims were chosen at random simply because of their religion.

Its current leader, Mark Fulton, was arrested by police recently in the early hours of a Saturday morning. A bail hearing on Tuesday was told that he had been firing a gun in the air after drinking heavily. The group has no political wing and no coherent political philosophy.

The LVF's decision to call a ceasefire, which took effect in May of this year, is believed to have been heavily influenced by its 19 imprisoned members. Without a ceasefire they would not have benefited from the Good Friday Agreement's provisions for early release.

The group opened contact with the Government through a Protestant pastor who had served a life sentence for double murder. It then publicly announced that it would decommission some of its weapons if the Government formally recognised its ceasefire. This the Government did some weeks ago.

While David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), called on the IRA and other loyalists to follow the LVF's example, both republican and loyalist spokesmen poured cold water on the idea that decommissioning by the major groups had become any more likely.



A terrorist rifle given up by the LVF Unionists being destroyed at a warehouse in Belfast yesterday John Giles

The Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, said that he welcomed the LVF move if it was a genuine disarmament effort, but added that the IRA had already made its contribution to peace by announcing and maintaining a ceasefire.

David Ervine of the Ulster

Volunteer Force-linked Progressive Unionist Party said: "This is a Christmas farce. I'm sorry to have to tell you it won't make a damn button of difference to the main paramilitary organisations."

In their agreement, thrashed out principally between the

UUP and the nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party, it was decided that a new Northern Ireland government would have 10 departments. There are also to be six cross-border implementation bodies responsible for areas such as trade and business develop-

ment and the Irish language, and provision for closer north-south co-operation in areas such as tourism and agriculture. Mr Trimble, who has been troubled by doubters within his party's ranks, received the endorsement of his executive by 70 to 30, which he said reflected

the "stability of support" for his position. He was, however, accused of selling out by the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, which said yesterday's agreement would pave the way for Sinn Féin to take its seats in a new executive without IRA arms decommissioning.

The LVF arms handover was described as a modest but significant move by the Canadian General John de Chastelain, who heads the decommissioning body. The general said that he hoped for complete disarmament by May 2000.

ULSTER'S ARSENAL

YESTERDAY'S decommissioning of Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) weapons in Belfast, though carrying a powerful symbolic charge because of its unprecedented nature, represents but a drop in the ocean in terms of Northern Ireland's total arsenal.

The Government's hope will be that the LVF's action in handing over fewer than a dozen guns will start the ball rolling. But everyone is well aware that there are possibly thousands of guns in the hands of paramilitary groups which show no sign of following suit.

The most heavily armed group is the IRA, which in the mid-1980s received several shiploads of guns from Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's Libyan regime, transforming it into the best-supplied terrorist group in Western Europe. Some of this material has since been seized by the security forces north and south of the border, but a great deal is still hidden. At the heart of the IRA arsenal are up to 1,000 rifles, most of them modern Kalashnikovs which came from Libya. It also has hundreds of pistols and handguns.

The IRA also received from Cal Gaddafi a selection of sophisticated weaponry including powerful machine-guns, some anti-aircraft weapons and a number of ground-to-air missiles. It may also have a couple of flame-throwers. It may possess up to three tons of Semtex, the plastic explosive which the IRA incorporated into armour-piercing grenades, shoulder-fired rockets, mortars and under-car booby trap devices. Loyalist groups such as the UVF and UDA, though much larger than the IRA, are not nearly so well-equipped, though a shipment from South Africa about 10 years ago brought them hundreds more guns. They are thought to have perhaps 400 rifles and 300 handguns, together with dozens of machine-guns and a small quantity of explosives. Northern Ireland also has an inordinate number of legally-held firearms - 139,000 in a country of a million and a half people. Most of these are shotguns and airguns, together with 13,000 small-bore rifles and 12,700 handguns.

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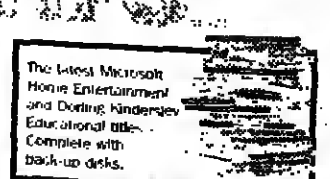
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Branson record bid airborne

RICHARD BRANSON and his round-the-world balloon crew were yesterday heading towards the Middle East after a perfect morning launch.

After a two-week wait for the right weather conditions and overcoming complications caused by the crisis in Iraq the ICO global challenge set off on its 24,000-mile flight at 9.30am from Marrakesh in Morocco with its three-man crew.

Mr Branson, 48, Per Lindstrand, 47, and millionaire American Steve Fossett, 54, who hold numerous ballooning records between them, have dedicated the attempt to their former co-pilot Alex Ritchie who died in April after a parachuting accident. Mr Ritchie saved the lives of Messrs Branson and Lindstrand when the Virgin Global Challenge balloon crashed in the Algerian desert in January 1997.



Richard Branson with daughter Holly before the balloon launch (top left) in Marrakesh yesterday Reuters

Doctors upset by jibe over private work

OPEN HOSTILITIES have broken out between doctors' leaders and the Government over allegations by the Health minister, Alan Milburn, that hospital consultants are spending too much time doing private work.

The British Medical Association reacted angrily to criticism of consultants contained in a letter from Mr Milburn to the Doctors and Dentists Pay Review Body (DDRB).

In the letter, Mr Milburn reiterated his plan, announced last summer, to reform the pay of consultants to reward those who spend more time on NHS patients.

However, the language that he used infuriated doctors. Mr Milburn wrote: "Taxpayers have a right to expect value for money from this highly paid group of professionals. There are a minority of consultants who do not properly co-operate in working productively for the NHS and put their private practice before their NHS work."

The BMA fired off its own protest letter to Brandon Gough, chairman of the DDRB, defending the consultants. "The fact is that consultants across the board are already working some 51 hours per week, well in excess of the legal maximum," said Ian Bogle, chairman of the BMA council.

The row signals deteriorating relations between the BMA and the Government. Senior

BY COLIN BROWN
AND JEREMY LAURANCE

doctors have become weary of reports of incompetent or misbehaving doctors being used to tar the whole profession and believe that Mr Milburn is fanning the flames against them.

The association was also angered by Mr Milburn's earlier proposal to change the law underpinning the General Medical Council to make it easier for the Government to intervene in its running.

Although the proposal was rehashed, doctors saw that episode as evidence that he was more interested in controlling the profession than working with it.

The latest row has its origins in an Audit Commission investigation three years ago which found that consultants with large private practices were neglecting their NHS duties, leaving junior doctors to run outpatient clinics and carry out operations unsupervised.

The Audit Commission found that although most doctors worked long hours and showed great dedication to the NHS there was wide variation in the amount of work done by consultant surgeons.

Some were doing five times as much as others, even after allowing for differences in the nature of the operations and the complexity of the cases. The re-

port also found that the 25 per cent of consultants who did most private work, did least for the NHS.

The BMA said then that the commission had failed to take account of the time doctors spent on call and had made false comparisons between them.

In the latest dispute about pay, the association complained on Thursday that it had been misled. Health department officials who attended a meeting with the BMA about the consultants "did not even raise the question of pay, let alone give an indication that there was any question of a major restructuring of NHS pay," said Dr Bogle.

Mr Milburn said the current pay system was holding back the modernisation of the NHS. "Too many NHS staff work under outdated, narrow job labels and depend on a range of arcane allowances of varying value to enhance basic pay," he said. "This fragmented approach to pay and conditions distorts working patterns and inhibits the development of the 24-hour flexible services we want for patients."

In a separate letter to the nurses' pay review body, Mr Milburn said that a new national pay system for the NHS was needed. "The scale of the problem calls for radical solutions," he said.

Priest and friend win £165,000 from 'Sun'

A ROMAN Catholic priest and his friend, a former headteacher, were yesterday awarded a total of £165,000 damages after suing the Sun newspaper.

Father Noel Barry, press secretary to Cardinal Thomas Winning, head of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, and Annie Clinton, an education adviser with Glasgow City Council, claimed that an article in *The Scottish Sun* in September 1996 implied they were involved in a long-term, secret, sexual relationship.

Each sued for damages of £200,000 and after a trial lasting 10 days at Edinburgh's Court of Session, a judge awarded the pair a substantial part of it. Fr Barry, 42, of Milngavie, Strathclyde, won £45,000 and Ms Clinton, 51, of Lanarkshire, won £120,000. The jury took almost four hours to reach a unanimous verdict that the pair had been defamed.

There was no reaction from Fr Barry or Ms Clinton, who were sitting next to each other in the court, but when the jury left Ms Clinton hugged her lawyer. The pair admitted spending nights under the same roof at Ms Clinton's house, but denied they ever had a sexual relationship.

It had taken the bombing of Iraq to knock the "priest story" off the front pages in Scotland yesterday after a former nun

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN
Scotland Correspondent



Fr Barry: Vow of celibacy

Caroline Brown, 38, told the court that she lost her virginity to Fr Barry in a Preston hotel room in 1985.

Mrs Brown, who now has two children, told the court that Fr Barry had lied under oath. She said they had been in love and she thought they would marry, but their relationship petered out after he failed to leave the priesthood.

In the witness box at the beginning of the trial, Fr Barry had spoken of the night in the Crest Hotel, but denied that he broke his vow of celibacy although he was "tempted".

However, he suggested to the jury there were times when he would have liked sexual in-

timacy. "Right now, I suppose I can honestly say, hand on heart, that in an ideal world, if such exists, for me as a human being I would want to be married, but that is a sacrifice I have chosen to make as a priest," he said.

The Sun, and good many other observers of the case, thought it had a match-winning witness in Mrs Brown. Bruce Waddell, editor of *The Scottish Sun*, said that after the "very private and very painful" evidence given by Mrs Brown, he was "extremely disappointed" at the verdict for Father Barry. The publishers are considering an appeal.

Cardinal Winning, the Archbishop of Glasgow, said that the church had not paid anything to the costs incurred by his press secretary in fighting the case and refused to be drawn into debate on the case. "To prolong the personal hurt of those whose lives have been affected by this incident is pointless," he said.

Mrs Brown told the court on Thursday that the Cardinal had been unsympathetic when she approached him about the liaison with Fr Barry. He had asked her if she had any tape recordings. "I became quite upset," she said. "I said 'I don't think you realise how difficult this is for me to come here'. [The cardinal] said 'What do you want, tears?'"

Chaucer and Shakespeare manuscripts are stolen

MANUSCRIPTS AND books including a rare Shakespeare edition and a fragment of a Chaucer poem worth at least £250,000 in total have been stolen from Durham University. Police believe professional thieves may have been acting for a collector.

Cases containing the works, part of an exhibition open to the public on the development of English literature, were forced open. The theft was discovered on Thursday but the last confirmed sighting of the two manuscripts and five books was the previous Friday, when the exhibition closed.

A university spokesman said: "The ... library is not a hideaway library. We're part of the heritage of the region and we put on displays. There is always a risk in putting things on show but nothing on this scale has ever happened before." It

BY LOUISE JURY

SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES, HISTORIES & TRAGEDIES



A First Folio was among the treasures stolen

was unclear how the works were taken from the building without anyone noticing. They would be "virtually impossible to sell on the legitimate market". The three most valu-

able items were a manuscript of an English translation of the New Testament from the late 14th or early 15th century, a manuscript including the fragment of a Chaucer poem from about the same period, and a copy of the first printed edition of Shakespeare's collected works, from 1623.

The Shakespeare was particularly significant, as it was bought new by Bishop Cosin, when he was Bishop of Durham, and was the only First Folio edition to have stayed in the original collection in Durham. Among the other treasures were a 1566 edition of works by the 10th-century writer Aelfric and an edition of the Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf* printed in 1812.

A police spokesman said the library did not seem to have been broken into and it appeared the theft had taken place while it was open.

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Memories: a national asset being wasted

BY IAN JACK

THE ROT of the family has many consequences for frail old people and most of them are well enough known. Paid home-helps replace dutiful, unpaid daughters as bed-makers, dusters and dish-washers. The social worker visits once a week.

And now, at this season, there will be cards on the mantelpiece from the grandchildren, badly lettered to GrandMa (writing is not what it was in her day), with a ps from their parents saying that, traffic permitting on the motorway, they hope to be there about five o'clock on the 24th.

This is how freedom, mobility and ambition have arranged our lives and, though inner and outer voices sometimes nag us, we are more or less happy to let other people, paid by national and local taxation or privately, take the strain.

The professions of medicine and social work have provided substitutes for the family. The day-care centre has replaced the neighbourhood. Doing the hokey cokey may not have the same rewards as a grandchild dandled on the knee, but the people in charge are kind and help you, if you are frail, to get on and off the lavatory, raise you in and out of the bath.

But what happens here to memory? Whatever their demands, that is what the old have always given us: some sense of individual history of how things were before we came along.

Until this week, when I went to a new day-care centre in London, it had never occurred to me that remembering - vocally remembering - was also a casualty of atomised families and fractured communities and that it needed to be formalised as a kind of amusement or therapy, like the hokey cokey or back massage.

In fact, Reminiscence - an official recreation which deserves the capital R, like Ludo - turns out to be one of social work's small growth areas. At the Soho Centre for Health Care, they have regular sessions of Reminiscence which are focused by subject and framed by rules. One week it might be "School days" and the next "Work". Participants must not interrupt one another, confidences must be kept. Objects (tram tickets? Sunlight soap?) stimulate the memory are kept in the Reminiscence Centre at Blackheath in south-east London, a sort of memory bank.

A publisher specialises in Reminiscence quiz books for the old. In the Soho centre, I looked at one.

Q: What were people asked to Dig For?
A: Victory.

Q: Whose catchphrase was "Can you hear me mother?"
A: Sandy Powell.

Further Q: Who was Sandy Powell? Further A: If you need to ask, forget it!

All this was a surprise. I had no idea that memory was a niche market. I had thought that we all grew up with some equivalent of old Steptoe or Alf Garnett, forever remembering.

Marie Marsh, who runs the day-care centre for Westminster City Council and Age Concern, said that you sometimes had to go carefully during sessions of remembering. People did not, as the whole, like to remember

and for that reason the war was not a popular subject. The coronation, on the other hand, was very popular indeed.

"Any particular coronation?" I asked. There are many people still alive, after all, who can remember three.

"You know, the coronation," said Ms Marsh's assistant. "In 1951 or 1952 or whenever it was."

I supplied the proper date - that summer everyone at school got New Testaments with EXTRA stamped on the jacket. And now, feeling like an inmate rather than a visitor, I was taken to see some people who would talk about their memories.



APPEAL

There were three: Amy Brown, born in Chelsea, west London, 1908; Rose Maddocks, born Dublin, 1913; Jim Proudfoot, born Lowestoft, Suffolk, 1918. One way to summarise their lives, although it is a poor guide to their personalities, is what they once did for a living. Mrs Brown was a domestic servant: "I started as a kitchen maid in a big house in Cadogan Gardens on a shilling a week." Mr Proudfoot worked on a farm and on fishing drifters before the war and for United Dairies after it, with service in the Royal Air Force between. Mrs Maddocks moved as a teenager from Ireland to England and worked in munitions.

Here are some of the things they said, witness statements to this closing century.

EARLIEST MEMORIES

"THE WHEELS on my mother's wheelchair. She had rheumatic fever. My dad had died. I was about four." (Mr Proudfoot)

"Something one night in our house. This must have been 1914. My mother's brother was in the Lancers and he was going off to France. He was worried about his horse. I remember the tears, bow upset everyone was." (Mrs Brown)

"Going to school in Dublin. Going to school and not learning much." (Mrs Maddocks)

FIRST PUBLIC EVENTS

"THAT EXPLOSION in the East End. What was it called now? It shook our flats all the way over in Chelsea. I remember a man on the street saying: 'Silvertown went up.' Yes, that's what it was, the Silvertown explosives factory. A lot died there, mainly girls and women. They'd all turned yellow from the TNT [explosive], but it was all hushed up." (Mrs Brown)

"An election meeting in our village hall at Hopton. We were taken along to sit at the back and told keep quiet." (Mr Proudfoot)

WORK

"IT WAS hard, very hard. On the farm, you used to have to pick out all the sugar beet by hand. That wasn't a very good prospect, facing a 30-acre field on a cold morning. You worked and you bit your tongue." (Mr Proudfoot)

"Yes, if you so much as looked at somebody sideways, they'd give you the sack." (Mrs Brown)

SEX

"It happened but nobody talked about it." (Mrs Maddocks)

"If you had sex in Hopton you just went about with a smile on your face." (Mr Proudfoot)

"What with the horsewhip and the old man, you didn't dare go wrong." (Mrs Brown)

"If a girl went wrong she moved away." (Mr Proudfoot)

And the later sexual liberty? Nobody was disturbed by it - "You have to go forward with the times." (Mrs Brown)

CLASS

"HOWEVER POOR you were there was always a little bit of snobbery there. My mother was in service and she used to say that there was more snobbery below stairs than above them."

And if you went to the village dance you always took a packet of Woodbine in one pocket and Players in the other. Woodbine was your normal smoke. The Players were there in case you met someone." (Mr Proudfoot)

"Yes, but the proper gentry weren't so bad. We were never supposed to travel in the lift with the family, but if they were there they'd say 'Come in, child, come in'. The butler would never say that." (Mrs Brown)



Rose Maddocks, born in Dublin in 1913: 'We never got a proper education. All we got was prayers' David Rose

WOMEN

"THEY WERE treated badly. The men kept them down a lot. They hardly ever went out, they were too busy at home making ends meet. When a girl did go out, she always came home to questions, 'Where've you been, oo've you been talking to?'" (Mrs Brown)

"You were down at the bottom. We never got a proper education. All we got was prayers." (Mrs Maddocks)

"I don't want to boast but me and my wife always went out together. That was unusual. I played darts once a week for years with a group of fellers and I never knew they were married. I can never stand hearing a man doing his wife down, it annoys me. To talk about your wife as 'the old woman', that's terrible." (Mr Proudfoot)

I spent all day on the hike and got soaked." (Mr Proudfoot)

"My uncle who was in the Lancers died and it finished my grandfather off. But at the end of the war my mother took us all up to Hyde Park to a concert. Dame Clara Butt was singing. Lovely. I'll always remember that." (Mrs Brown)

THE BEST TIMES

"TO BE about 13 at the time and I got a brand new bike for Christmas. It was pouring, but

"Being here [the Westminster centre]." (Mrs Maddocks)

FOOD

"THERE WASN'T much of it to begin with. You know what they used to say at the butcher's. A sheep's head please and can you leave the eyes in? It's got to see through us through the week." (Mr Proudfoot)

"Bacon and egg, dripping and bread. Good beef dripping." (Mrs Maddocks)

"And it doesn't seem to have done us any harm." (Mr Proudfoot)

MISSING THINGS

"PEACE AND quiet. It's all noise now, everything blaring." (Mrs Brown)

"To the sound of the hokey cokey from the day's exercise class."

"Manners. I was taught to say please and thank you and good morning. Everybody's in a rush, everybody wants to get things done too quickly." (Mr Proudfoot)

POLITICIANS

"TO MY mind, the only one who was true to his word was Winston Churchill. He promised us blood, sweat and tears. And by God we got them." (Mr Proudfoot)

THE FUTURE

I WONDERED if they believed in the after-life.

"We have to believe there's a heaven. But we'll have to wait and see." (Mrs Brown)

"Nobody's ever come back to tell us." (Mrs Maddocks)

"So it must be a good place." (Mrs Brown)

"Probably three square meals a day and all found." (Mr Proudfoot)

AS MR Proudfoot almost put it,

they had all been on the platform when the innovations that define the 20th century had arrived. Radio, television, phones, cars, jets, computers, central heating - amazing changes for a generation who had spent their childhood evenings in the light of coal-fires, oil lamps and candles.

Of course, we know all this from books and television documentaries. We can easily be connected to the past. Or can we? I had never heard of the Silvertown explosion before Mrs Brown remembered it. Even quite detailed histories of London do not mention it. Eventually, I found a description. It happened in 1917 during a fire at Brunner Mond's chemical works. Fifty tons of TNT went up, a large area was flattened, 69 people died and another 400 were hurt, many seriously. In the war, it was nothing.

The site lies just across the Thames from the new Millennium Dome at Greenwich. When and if I go to the Dome, I will think of the scene for a moment: wrecked houses, dead munitions girls, the water shaking in the river for the 10 miles up to Chelsea. It deserves to be remembered. That will be Mrs Brown's gift to me.

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Shield 'killed' in Bronze Age ritual

By STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

A CEREMONIAL shield from the Bronze Age may have been ritually "killed" and then buried according to archaeologists who have spent the past year restoring the object.

The decorative shield, the first from the Bronze Age to be recovered from an archaeological site in Britain, was stabbed three times as it lay in the hole it was buried in.

Andrew Wilson, the conservator at Wiltshire County Council who excavated it, said the soil beneath showed signs that the object had been deliberately speared from above by a sharp pole or lance. The 3,000-year-old shield, found at South Cadbury, Somerset would also have had little military use.

"The shield was so incredibly thin that it could have had no protective function - it could never have been used defensively in battle," Mr Wilson said.



Andrew Wilson puts the final touches to the restoration of the 3000-year-old bronze shield

Phil Yeomans

Saudi nurse 'caught on bank camera'

By JOE QUINN

THE NURSE Lucille McLauchlan, freed earlier this year from a Saudi jail, agreed that she was pictured by a bank security camera days after a pensioner's bank card went missing from a hospital, a court heard yesterday. But Ms McLauchlan, 33, was unable to explain to police her presence at the bank's cash machine, an officer said.

Pc Helen Mann, of Tayside Police Fraud Branch, was giving evidence on the second day of the trial of the nurse, who faces two charges of theft and one of fraud. Ms McLauchlan, charged in her married name of Ferrie, faces charges relating to a period in 1996 in her home city of Dundee before she

left for Saudi Arabia. Later that year she and another nurse, Deborah Parry, were arrested by Saudi police investigating the murder of the Australian nurse Yvonne Gilford. Ms Parry was sentenced to death for murder and Ms McLauchlan was jailed for eight years. They were freed after serving 17 months and returned to Britain.

Pc Mann told Dundee Sheriff Court that in April 1996 she was investigating an alleged bank-card theft when she and a colleague studied film from a camera at a Bank of Scotland branch in Nethergate, Dundee. The sequence, taken on 11 March 1996, showed a woman spending time at a key pad, apparently keying in entries and staying longer than other customers, as if making more than one transaction.

She told the court she visited Ms McLauchlan's home on 10 April. "I recognised her from the still photographs on the tape," she said. Ms McLauchlan told officers she had no Bank of Scotland cards. Although she agreed it was her picture in the photographs, she was unable to give an explanation for her presence at the machine.

Two women said to have provided references to help Ms

McLauchlan get a job in Saudi Arabia told the court they had not written them and that their signatures were forgeries. Tracy Aitken, a former nurse, said a reference for Ms McLauchlan purporting to be from her was false. She had previously provided Ms McLauchlan with a reference but the one presented to a Saudi recruitment firm was not the one she had written. Referring to errors in the letter, Mrs Aitken said: "Obviously this has been typed by somebody who cannot work the correction ribbon on the typewriter. I take pride in my typing. I would never send a reference with scored-out typing errors like this."

A second "reference", Lorraine Deuchars, told the hearing before Sheriff Alistair Stewart that she was a lower grade nurse than Ms McLauchlan and would not have been in a position to write a reference even if asked to do so.

Ms McLauchlan has pleaded not guilty to stealing a bank card and diary in March 1996 while working at Dundee's King's Cross Hospital, and of stealing £1,960 by means of a feloniously obtained bank card.

She also denies getting her job in Saudi Arabia that year by fraud by making false claims in an application form to a recruiting agency, and offering forged references.

Virgin forces full fares on rail travellers

By PHILIP THORNTON
Transport Correspondent

VIRGIN RAIL, Richard Branson's troubled train business, was yesterday accused of driving its passengers on to the roads by banning cut-price fares from more than 50 services.

Virgin, which runs the West Coast main line and Cross-Country high-speed services, is cutting the number of trains that accept Saver, Supersaver and cheap day returns from 3 January.

Passengers on peak-time trains will have to buy the more expensive standard or first class tickets. A London to Manchester return ticket will cost £108. A Supersaver was £39.50 and a Saver was £46.50.

The company is also tightening its Virgin Value ticket to force passengers to book three working days in advance instead of the current deadline of 6pm on the day before travel.

Virgin said the changes were designed to encourage people to travel on the less crowded off-peak trains and to book.

Jonathan Bray, of the campaign group Save Our Railways, said: "This latest move by Vir-

gin will make rail travel more complicated and expensive for passengers. If rail is to compete effectively with the car it needs to be convenient and flexible."

The policy was a sign that Virgin is aiming at the business travel market at the expense of the leisure passenger, he said. "It is another indication that the long distance companies are moving towards airline fares which means that if you want to travel, book in advance - otherwise travel when they want you to," he said.

The new rules apply to trains between London and Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Preston and Wolverhampton. The change also affects trains on the Cross-Country network of services that do not stop in London.

A Virgin spokesman said: "We are very anxious to reduce overcrowding wherever possible and we are trying to encourage as many passengers as possible to get a guaranteed seat by booking in advance."

MILLENNIUM BUG WATCH

IT HAS begun. The legal wrangling, that is, over exactly who is responsible when problems occur, or look like they are going to. Both cases here are from the United States, but it is only a matter of time before such legal resorts cross the Atlantic.

First, Ruth Kaczmarek, an independent programmer who develops products that use Microsoft's Foxpro database, is suing the software giant, claiming it provided a package called Visual Foxpro 6.0, despite knowing it has a glitch. On Microsoft's own Year 2000 page it is made plain that the program assumes two-digit year dates are in the 20th century.

Ms Kaczmarek wants Microsoft to write a "patch" but Microsoft doesn't.

Meanwhile, consulting firm Arthur Andersen is suing one of its customers, retailing company J Baker, which had the check to demand a free upgrade for a sales system Andersen's had supplied. Andersen claims in its suit that J Baker knew the system relied on a two-digit date system.

Is this sounding familiar?

CHARLES ARTHUR

Please send tips and tales to: bug@independent.co.uk

PAUL VALLEY




Even paganism, it seems, is not what it was. Happy holidays!

IN THE WEEKEND REVIEW PAGE 6

HOMEBASE

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150 من الاصل

Time fails to heal wounds of Lockerbie victim's family

OUTSIDE, in the pitch-black winter night, it is just beginning to drizzle. In an isolated country house, south of Birmingham, Jane and Jim Swire are huddling in a back room, watching themselves on television. It is the documentary's grainy 1960s cine-camera footage which makes them smile. There, on Jim's home island of Skye, is Flora, their first born, venturing into the sea in that rocking, toddler way, watched by a younger, pretty Jane, and Jim, handsome in a kilt.

A tape, recorded at Christmas in 1977 and borrowed by the television production team, starts off the tears. The sound of a teenage Flora singing in harmony with her younger sister, Cathy, fills the room. That is followed by Flora singing with an older man. "That's me and Flora," says Jim, his eyes drifting from the television to rest despondently on his feet.

A brief glimpse of happier, sunnier times when neither parent could have imagined that their Flora, at the age of 24 and so full of promise, would be rubbed out by the terrorist bomb which blew Pan Am Flight 103 out of the sky over the Scottish town of Lockerbie. The atrocity, on 21 December 1988, claimed 270 lives, including 11 from Lockerbie who per-

BY MARY BRAID

and courtship of the media have meant family neglect. Devotion to a dead child has cost the surviving siblings.

The Swires do not hide their differences, and even joke that Flora speaks to them in different voices. Father hears a daughter who tells him to "get the bastards", while mother says Flora would have weighed that up against the family's needs.

Methods of coping diverged from the start. Jim, against all the expert advice, insisted on seeing Flora's body. "But I wanted to remember her as she was when I hugged her goodbye and not as a battered body," says Jane.

She admits she envied her husband his anger, a force which propelled him into a frenetic search, not just for the killers but for truth. He learnt to lobby and studied almost every terrorist group which could possibly have been responsible.

He now believes that warnings of an imminent terrorist attack were kept from the public. He raised questions about the reluctance of previous British and United States governments to hold a public inquiry into the disaster, suggesting they must have something to



The bomb claimed 270 lives *Daily Record*

ished when Pan Am's burning wreckage fell to earth. Western governments have failed to find the killers. For 10 years Jim seems only to have lived to harass politicians.

Jim Swire was always tall and thin. But the past decade has hollowed him out, leaving him cadaverous. As spokesman for the relatives of the British bomb victims, his snowy hair and careworn face are now familiar.

Jane, open-faced and motherly, is, by comparison, hardly known. And without her husband she would have preserved her anonymity. For while the Old Etonian, Bromsgrove GP has taken a high-profile public path, Jane—quiet and gentle but courageously honest—does not pretend to like his choice. Nor does she pretend that it has made Cathy or Flora's younger brother William happy.

"This is Jim's way," she says, of a husband whose mobile phone stuck on ear, resumes the endless fielding of calls from journalists whose appetites for Lockerbie has been re-whetted by the 10th anniversary on Monday, and the news that the Libyan parliament has backed a proposal for two of its nationals – suspects in the attack – to be tried in a neutral country, under Scottish law.

"He needed to do it," she says, of a husband whose obsession with tracking down his daughter's killers led to the loss of his partnership in the local medical practice. "Otherwise he would have had a breakdown. But he has paid a heavy price."

So too have his family. "He tries to join in with family things," says Jane. "But his mind is elsewhere and often he's so physically tired." Years of globetrotting - including three controversial meetings with Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and a string of overseas trips to lobby world leaders -

hide. His anger still burns. He did not raise Flora, he says, as "political cannon fodder".

Jane found no comfort in complex terrorist conspiracies or public campaigns. The ultimate truth for her is that Flora is no more. And her greatest regret – however irrational – is still that she was not there for her daughter at the end.

She has read everything about the disintegration of planes. When she learned there might have been up to 15 seconds of consciousness, she sat alone, timing the period again and again on the kitchen clock.

She could not bear the thought that there was time for realisation and terror, and time for pain. "But a large plane like that does not just break up in a few seconds and our senses are designed to take things in so quickly," she says.

Unlike many of the relatives, she found no comfort in the return of Flora's belongings, or the grave stone erected for her daughter on their beloved Skye, overlooking the water in which she once paddled. "I cannot find Flora in stone," she says. "She was such a free spirit and her death was such a waste of all the energy and effort she put into life."

The former religious education teacher prefers not to talk about her post-Lockertie religious convictions. But clearly they are shaken.

Every day she confronts the dead weight of grief, while presenting as positive a face as possible for her children. William was only 16 when Flora died. Her husband, meanwhile, rides a never-ending emotional roller coaster.

This week he is on a high, for these are encouraging times. In the early years Margaret Thatcher would not even see the relatives of those who died, let alone grant their request for



Jim and Jane Swire (right) lost their daughter Flora, shown here in a painting, at the age of 24 in the Lockerbie blast 10 years ago



Graham Trotter

a public inquiry. Now the US and British governments are backing the proposal for Scottish justice to be exercised on foreign soil.

Jim doubts the Libyans killed his daughter but believes their trial will open "other avenues". A can of worms, he is sure, is about to be prised open. After his meeting earlier this month with Tony Blair he believes the Government will grant the investigation into security and intelligence that the families have been campaigning for for years.

Jim's high is a mixed blessing. His wife is pleased that he is happy. But if the trial comes to nothing a deep depression will almost certainly follow.

They have been there before. But for now there is hope, and, for Jim, at least, gallons of soothing, reassuring, media interest. "The media have sometimes been my only friends," he says. "And I've learned you always have to be available for them ... The worst thing would be if they lost interest."

So all day journalists have trooped through Jane's kitchen

mainly to see Jim and take pictures of the huge painting of Flora by the father of the American boyfriend she was flying to visit. The portrait shows the

adult Flora. Jim describes as a stunning combination of "brains and beauty", on the brink of a promising medical career.

Even at 9pm, tools can be heard buzzing from a distant room. Jim's activity seldom ceases, though as a doctor he knows this may be dangerous grief displacement. He is repairing a mirrored candle holder he designed five years ago to

mount 270 candles to mark Lockerbie's fifth anniversary. On Monday at the British relatives' commemoration service at Westminster Abbey it

In the past 10 years the numbers of families attending public commemorations have dwindled. Some prefer to mark the day in private. But deaths from stress-related illnesses have also reduced numbers.

Families have also split. As grief took them on different paths, Jane admits even she considered leaving. But she

reached the conclusion that everyone reacts differently. She is proud Jim's energy and courage have taken the campaign so far. What else but ab-

absolute commitment could bring about even the possibility of a trial. But who could blame her if she would rather it had been

The relatives are gathering at Westminster to take the heat off Lockerbie. It is no secret that many in the town would like to move on. Jane will be at the Westminster service. "But it is for Jim's sake that I will go," she

says. "In a terrible situation like this you just help each other survive. Because really that is all you are doing ... surviving."

There is no appeal and to this story. Little appears to have brought the Swires real comfort since their daughter's unnecessary death. Time has

Jane says journalists, like her husband, are more comfortable with the campaign story than a sadness which has no end. "Even a conviction," she warns, "is no cure for grief."

[illegible]

Mother dynast Spain

Galloway and Mr Benn may be fully paid-up members of the awkward squad but their records of defending freedom and democracy are better than most of those in Westminster.

The worst Labour lap dog was the surprising figure of Dale Campbell Savours, who once enjoyed a reputation as a parliamentary terrier. Now reduced to abusing Tam Dalyell, he claimed that it was outrageous for MPs even to argue about the issues. Mr Dalyell, Mr

I ATTENDED the right-wing No Turning Back Group annual Christmas dinner in honour of its president, Baroness Thatcher, on the evening of the final Lords debate on the European Elections Bill. Voting, however, came before old cronies for the former prime minister.

Hardly had she swallowed a

Cheated of the opportunity of hearing replays of their heroine's past glories, the Tory MPs went back to the Commons for the 10pm vote. Three former members, defeated at the election but invited for old time's sake, stayed behind to enjoy a brandy, only to find themselves joined by the returning Lady Thatcher, who forced them to endure an hour-long monologue, encompassing Europe, the Falklands War and, of course, the Pinochet case.

Her greatest ire was reserved for Jack Straw, the Home Secretary. Clearly, she retains strong memories of the trouble he caused her when she was education secretary ("Milk Snatcher Thatcher") and he was the president of the National Union of Students nearly 30 years ago. Sadly, there was not a word out of turn about William Hague.

MARTIN BELL, the Independent MP for Tatton, is concerned about the threat to democracy posed by the Registration of Political Parties Act, which has just reached the statute book.

Mr. Bell has received a letter from the Registrar inviting him to register as a political party. Under the Act he is not allowed to register as "independent" and asks what he is expected to do. "What

Portillo's dashing greetings card scene which could be a portent for events next year

else should I be? The Tatton Park Party, the Flat Earth Party or the Knutsford Heath Party? It doesn't make sense," he says.

Mr Bell's principal concern was for independent-minded members

of established parties. From now on it will be against the law to stand as independent Labour, independent Conservative or independent Liberal Democrat. The provision prohibits the right of an individual who has fallen out with his party to stand as an independent member

of that party, which would, for example, stop Ken Coates from standing for the European parliament next year as an independent Labour candidate. The Act also applies to local government.

Mr Bell believes space must be given to free spirits, independent-minded people and people outside the system. "They do not threaten the system but reinforce it by adding legitimacy to the members of established parties who get elected," he says.

The Government, unsurprisingly, disagrees. According to George Howarth, the Home Office minister, "the conjunction of the words 'independent' and 'party' is probably a tautology". And there was no hint of irony in his voice.

THE SO-CALLED "free vote" on modernisation turned out to be a farce with Labour whips patrolling the entrance to the division lobbies. All Labour MPs, except the former

During the debate there was also growing concern over a proposal to consider the introduction of a "main committee". All MPs would be members of this committee which would sit in parallel and at the same time as the chamber to consider non-controversial legislation and select committee reports.

The proposal is modelled on the Australian parliament. Although there was no formal recommendation before the House it is the intention to return to the proposal. Given that the chamber is already empty most of the time, a "main committee" will provide yet another way of neutralising the mother of parliaments.

AS I finish this column, William Hague's gruesome Christmas card featuring a lonely shepherd leading seven sheep across a snowy wilderness under a black threatening sky arrives in the same post as Michael Portillo's colourful, 17-inch scene of a Sieneese general riding victoriously towards his palazzo. A portent of things to come next year, one can't help wondering.

oman to
lawful

MICHAEL PORTILLO warned fellow Eurosceptics yesterday that their campaign against the single currency could be blunted by their resorting to extremism.

**BY ANDREW GRICE AND
SARAH SCHAEFER**

The former Tory cabinet minister told a conference of European groups in London that potential supporters of the campaign could be "driven away through the use of extremist language". He described himself as "one who has not always spoken moderately in the past".

The motives of the founding fathers of the Treaty of Rome, who aimed to rid the continent of wars, were "understandable", he said. But he warned: "It is complete folly to believe that you will abolish extreme nationalism in Europe by abolishing nation states in Europe. When we risk creating again a lack of democracy and causes of contention and grievance in Europe, that is dangerous not just for Britain but for all our continent."

Mr Portillo was speaking at the launch of the Congress for Democracy, which has been set up to seek to bring together the many groups who oppose the single currency. The groups' impact has been weakened by divisions and rivalries amongst themselves.

The organisers included Labour MP Austin Mitchell and Sir Michael Spicer, a Tory MP and leader of the European Research Group. This has been at odds with the rival European Foundation headed by Bill Cash, another Tory MP whose presence at yesterday's launch

was seen as a hopeful sign that a united front might be forged against the euro.

Sharp differences emerged during a debate on tactics. Pam Davies, from the Labour Party's Safeguards Campaign, accused the Business for Sterling Group of "letting down" British trade because they were in favour of a single market when 80 per cent of British businesses were trading within Britain. "We want you to come out and say you want a free trade area", she said. Similar criticism was voiced by Lord Pearson of Rannoch, a Tory peer and prominent member of the Global Britain Group. Bernard Jenkin, Tory MP for Essex North, cautioned the different groups that "everyone had axes to grind and packages to buckle".

Peter Lewis, who organised the campaign for a referendum on the Maastricht treaty, added: "We have to be focused and must be disciplined ... otherwise they will always use the argument it is us against them and we will lose it."

About 250 representatives from 50 organisations, including trade unions, political parties and pressure groups, agreed a statement warning that the single currency was "designed to bring about political as well as economic union" and would mean interest, exchange and tax rates being set by institutions not accountable to the British people. They agreed to mount "a national campaign in defence of sterling".

The RR

THE GOVERNMENT won concessions on several smaller fishing quotas last night, to compensate for big reductions in Britain's right to exploit traditional stocks.

BY STEPHEN CASTLE
in Brussels

After 17 hours of negotiations in Brussels, Elliot Morley, Fisheries Minister, won agreement for a deal he estimated was worth £30m more for Britain's fishing industry than the European Commission's proposal.

However, Mr Morley did accept swinging cuts in big quotas, including those for herring off the west coast of Scotland and haddock in the North Sea.

In both those cases Britain agreed with the commission's scientific advice that the re-

ductions were vital to conserve fish stocks for future years. However, there was no attempt to disguise the fact that the quotas for next year will leave many of the country's 10,000 fishermen worse off, and the consumer facing higher prices.

The fishing industry was divided on the deal. Hamish Morrison, of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, described the quotas as "disastrous". But Barrie Deas, chief executive of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, said it "was a successful exercise against ... extreme provocation".

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RBS

Mother fights dynasty in Spain for son

A WOMAN from London is battling to win back her young son from members of one of Spain's most influential families who took the boy away from her.

Joanna Atfield fell for Daniel Mazin, a talented and fascinating Spanish businessman. She moved in with him and they had a baby, now aged two and a half. The relationship, always stormy, faltered during the pregnancy and collapsed soon after the birth.

Now Mr Mazin wants sole charge of the child and to stop Ms Atfield seeing him. On 23 October, in what she says was a carefully planned operation, Mr Mazin took their son out of nursery school in Madrid and she has not seen or spoken to the boy since. She says her struggle to keep her son in her life is "psychological torture".

Mr Mazin is arguing, through his lawyers, that his Atfield is mentally unstable and an unfit mother. Devastated and vulnerable in a foreign land, she fears losing her son for ever.

On 2 December she went to court to seek interim measures to get her son back until the question of legal custody is resolved, but the judge adjourned the hearing for social and psychological reports.

Ms Atfield, 34, says the odds are stacked against her because Spanish law gives the father equal claim, irrespective of which parent is the main carer.

BY ELIZABETH NASH
in Madrid

and because while she comes from a modest home near King's Cross, the wealthy and discreet Mazin family is one of the most powerful in Spain.

Daniel Mazin's father, Max, is leader of the country's Jewish community, a pioneer of Spain's entrepreneurs' association, and a major shareholder in a big hotel chain and a clutch of property companies. The family is linked by marriage and friendship to Spanish nobility and members of Jose Maria Aznar's conservative government.

Until shortly before he took their son, Daniel Mazin worked for an old friend of his father's, the international commodities millionaire Marc Rich. Mr Rich fled the United States for Switzerland after he was indicted by a Federal grand jury in New York in 1983 on charges of tax evasion, racketeering and participating in illegal oil deals with Iran.

"The Mazins are now saying I got pregnant deliberately to trap their son, which I didn't. It was an accident. But I knew immediately I wanted that child."

Lacking money and powerful friends, Ms Atfield says she feels "absolutely trapped. If I go quietly, I'll never see my son again. If I fight, I'm afraid they'll destroy me. It's like David and

Goliath, they're out of my league."

She met the father of her child at a party in March 1994. "For me it was love at first sight," Ms Atfield said, describing Mr Mazin as a brilliant, volatile person overshadowed by his father.

When she became pregnant in September 1995, she accepted the family's proposal that she convert to Judaism.

"I tried everything to make the relationship work, and I have great respect for Daniel's father. I spent two hours every day with the rabbi in the synagogue that Max had built in Madrid. Then in December, I went to Jerusalem to complete the studies, and came back converted. But Daniel detested me the more pregnant I got."

In March 1997, nine months after the baby was born, Mr Mazin moved out of the home they shared to a flat nearby that his mother found in one of Madrid's most distinguished squares.

"He would come round, flanked by members of the family, insisting on taking my baby away for visits. It broke my soul."

Pressed by the Mazins, she attended a number of psychiatric clinics in London, New York and Arizona, recommended by Daniel Mazin's own psychiatrist. "I thought it would help improve matters with the family. The Mazins have sub-



Joanna Atfield at her mother's home in King's Cross, London, calls the struggle to keep her son in her life 'psychological torture' Neville Elder

mitted to court a damning report from one clinic as evidence that she is mentally unstable. "But I never wanted to go to these clinics. It's true I lost it sometimes and shouted and screamed. But it wasn't because I was ill, but because

they were tormenting me." Ms Atfield's lawyer, Jaime Sanz de Bremon, says the family obtained a medical report illicitly, without her authorisation. "This amounts to a violation of rights in Spain and it must be considered in-

admissible evidence. The content of that report, describing her as psychotic and addicted to caffeine, alcohol and nicotine, is anyway open to question.

Joanna is not mentally unstable, according to an inde-

pendent psychiatrist who has seen her. She got into a nervous state because her personal circumstances were made so unbearable."

In Spanish law, Mr Mazin has the legal right to take the child. Ms Atfield's lawyer said, "but in

human terms, his action is completely unjust". Daniel Mazin's lawyer, Cristina Pena, said yesterday: "I'm bound by a code of professional secrecy and I can't talk to anyone unrelated to the case." Daniel Mazin did not return calls.

Woman to sue over unlawful sacking

A WOMAN dismissed after taking two years off in maternity leave and with pregnancy complications is to seek six-figure compensation from her former employers, who were yesterday found to have been guilty of sex discrimination.

In a key test of the rights of working women, the Court of Appeal decided IGE Medical Systems, a US company, acted unlawfully when it sacked Marion Halfpenny. The ruling clarifies the position of women who have complications in pregnancy and problems such as post-natal depression and then want to return to work.

Yesterday Mrs Halfpenny said: "This is the best Christmas present I could get. I am ecstatic with the result - the injustice of my case was the motivation behind my decision to take legal action."

Mrs Halfpenny, 39, of Broadbottom, Cheshire, became pregnant in 1994 and took paid sick leave from August of that year until March 1995, when her maternity leave began.

In September 1995 she told managers she would be back by the end of the following month. But on 13 October she asked for a postponement, because she had post-natal depression but her employers refused to extend her leave beyond 27 November. When Mrs Halfpenny was unable to return on that date, IGE said her contract was at an end.

She went to an industrial tribunal, which ruled in favour of

BY BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor



Marion Halfpenny: Wants six-figure compensation

the employer on grounds she had not returned to work and therefore was not employed and could not be dismissed.

The Employment Appeals Tribunal agreed with the lower court decision. The company, which has an equal-opportunities policy, has registered its intention to appeal to the Lords against yesterday's ruling.

Clare Hockney, principal legal officer with the Equal Opportunities Commission, which backed the case, said the Court of Appeal's ruling was a

"landmark decision" and would have a big impact on many other female employees.

"Mrs Halfpenny was exceptionally hard working and a long-standing employee," Ms Hockney said. "Her sickness record was excellent until she became pregnant. Unfortunately, she suffered illness during pregnancy and post-natal depression. As soon as she became well enough, Mrs Halfpenny made strenuous efforts to return to work. All she wanted was to be treated the same as any other employee."

The court was told that a male employee who had been on long sick leave had been treated more leniently than Mrs Halfpenny.

Mrs Halfpenny is now studying law and wants to specialise in discrimination and employment affairs. She registered her determination to seek damages for loss of earnings and injured feelings. Legislation imposes no upper limit on compensation for sex discrimination.

In his ruling Lord Justice Ward said she was a "limp" in the company. Originally her employers were sympathetic and agreed to extend her leave, but eventually management said that she could not have her job back. In doing so, IGE was deemed to have dismissed her unfairly. The judges also found it amounted to sex discrimination, because her treatment was less favourable than that of a male colleague.

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Revenge killings terrorise Kosovo

KOSOVO SEEMS poised to endure a terrifying Christmas, marked by tit-for-tat killings, kidnappings, knocks on the door at night and car-jackings on lonely country roads.

Yesterday, the body of the deputy mayor of the town of Kosovo Polje was found dumped on a road near the town. Zvonko Bojanic, a Serb, was dragged from his home in a nearby village by armed gunmen on Thursday night.

The murder will send a shiver up the spines of the province's fast dwindling Serbian community of about 200,000, surrounded as they are by almost 10 times as many Albanians.

Kosovo Polje is one of the few towns in the province with a large Serb population, and its name carries great resonance with Serbs as the site of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, the

BY MARCUS TANNER

most important date in Serbs' national consciousness.

The abduction conforms to a growing pattern. After the failure of an armed uprising against Serb rule in the spring, and its brutal suppression by the Serb military, the province's Albanian majority is turning to a war of attrition, killing local Serb officials and even civilians, instead of confronting the armed might of the Serbian state head on.

Earlier this week gunmen burst into a café frequented by Serbs in the western city of Pec, and gunned down six men.

The sporadic killings, reported to be the work of the an Albanian guerrilla force called the Kosovo Liberation Army, are, as ever, meeting a violent response from the Serbian security forces.



Kosovo Serbs show pictures of missing relatives. Tit-for-tat killings and kidnappings have undermined the province's fragile truce *Reuters*

At the weekend the Serbs announced they had killed 36 Kosovo fighters on the border with Albania proper. Yesterday, they were reported to have sealed off sections of the city of Pec and the nearby village of Glodjane and to have killed at least two Albanians.

In another effort to bolster Belgrade's hold over Kosovo, the government yesterday prevented the publication of the province's main Albanian language daily, *Bujku*, under a new information law passed in October against media deemed threatening to Serbia's

constitutional order. The law has been used extensively in Serbia proper to muzzle opponents of the government of President Slobodan Milosevic, Serbia's ruler since 1987.

The cycle of murders suggest strongly that the breathing space gained by an October

truce brokered by the United States, against a background of threatened air strikes against Serbia, is fast closing.

That agreement, cobbled together by the trouble-shooting US diplomat, Richard Holbrooke, envisaged fast progress towards discussions on Kosovo's future constitutional status between the Albanians and the Belgrade authorities.

Since then no talks have taken place, while the latest killings on both sides make the prospect of discussions even beginning in the New Year look unlikely.

Metro - the new perfume of Paris

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

THE SMELL of the Métro - something between burnt air and rotting bananas - is a characteristic Parisian experience: as much a part of the city for visitors as the Eiffel Tower or the Champs Elysées.

The magic formula is, or used to be, a delicate blend of scorched rubber, sweat and sewers. It also used to include the heavy scent of Gauloises and Gitanes, until cigarettes were banned from the Paris underground a decade ago.

In recent years, that trademark aroma has deteriorated for other reasons. Some of the homeless people who spend their days in Métro stations treat the corridors and, even the platforms, as lavatories.

The Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP), which runs all public transport in the French capital, commissioned an opinion poll to discover why Parisians were using the Métro less. A common reply was: "Ca pue." (It stinks).

The company decided to put things right for the centenary of the Métro in 12 months' time. In an experiment launched yesterday, one station is being suffused with a scent, especially designed by one of the big French perfume workshops.

The fragrance, described as having a "hint of spring flowers", will be mixed with cleaning agents and applied daily to the platforms, corridors and floors of the Invalides station. If successful, it will be applied to all 366 stations on the system.

The RATP is also working on a more technologically advanced solution: the use of ultra-violet light to smash the molecules hanging in the air which create bad odours. Either way, the old Métro smell seems likely to go the way of berets and yellow car-headlights. Another "exception Française" is about to disappear.



Mégret: 'The real Front'

Le Pen forces rivals to sit on the fringe

THE FAR-RIGHT National Front symbolically and publicly divided into two parties yesterday, confirming a 10-day old schism which now seems irreparable.

Jean-Marie Le Pen, the party's founder president, and his internal rival, Bruno Mégret, "met" for the first time since the NF imploded. They each took their seats in the re-

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

gional assembly for Provence, the Alps and the Côte d'Azur in Marseilles. Previously they had sat side by side. Yesterday they sat apart, proudly avoiding one another's gaze, and surrounded by their respective supporters.

At Mr Le Pen's insistence,

Mr Mégret and 10 of the 37 NF regional councillors were made to sit apart from the rest of the group. Also at Mr Le Pen's insistence, they sat to the far right of the assembly, even further to the right than the NF president and his loyalists.

The battle between the two wings of the NF - the Le Pen loyalists and purists and the Mégret modernisers - has been

fought, in part, with infantile pique of this kind. But it has also developed into a legal struggle for the party's money and the party's name.

As Mr Mégret put it: "The historic Front is them. The real Front is us. The problem now is to decide which of us is the legal Front." His supporters say they have more than the 20 per cent of signatures of NF

members they need to call an emergency conference to decide the party's future. Mr Le Pen refuses to countenance such a meeting. The Mégretists will go ahead anyway and hold their congress at Marnage, north of Marseilles, on 24 January. It will almost certainly declare Mr Le Pen deposed and elect Mr Mégret as head of his "real" NF. First in-

dications from around the country are that the party has been carved down the middle.

Although Mr Le Pen took the majority of NF regional councillors in the south, Mr Mégret has the overwhelming majority in Lorraine and exactly half in the Paris region. He also has two of the four NF mayors (including his wife) and more than half the NF national council.

ROBIN WILLIAMS

WHAT DREAMS COME TRUE

AFTER THE RAIN THERE IS MORE

STARTS SATURDAY DECEMBER 26

Italy's earthquake victims left in limbo

BY FRANCES KENNEDY
in Colfiorito, Umbria

IN THE thick fog it is easy to miss the entrance to the Colfiorito camp. At the gate is a prefabricated container with posters of Mickey Mouse in the windows and a sign saying "Welcome to the Disney Club". It is the one flash of colour in an uncomprehensibly cold, grey panorama.

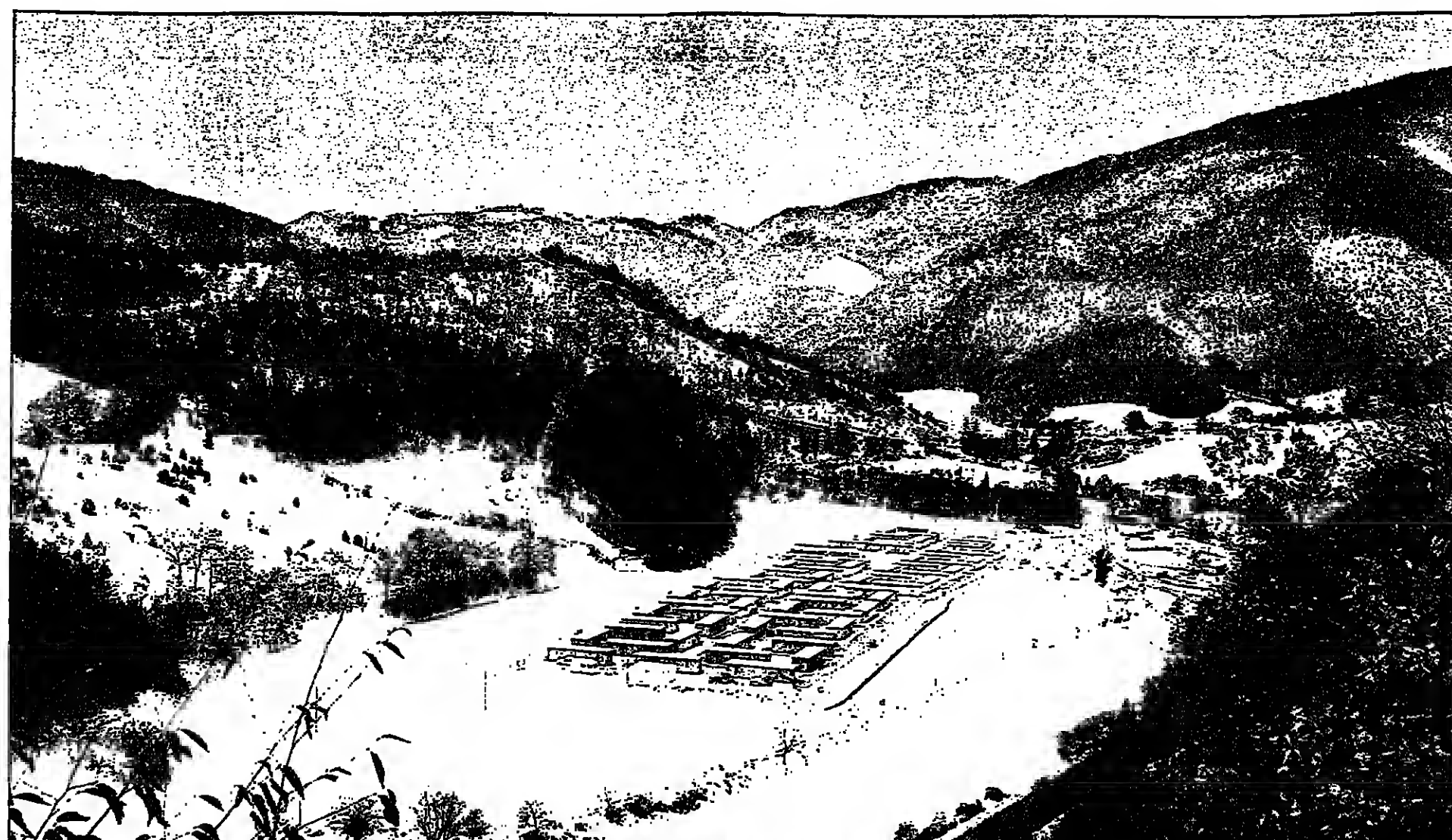
Snow has been shovelled into neat piles along the gravel paths that divide one clump of containers from another. A central domed structure houses the electricity generator. Beyond it, a large metal shed with a wooden crucifix and a noticeboard outside, doubles as church and community centre.

The improvised village on the outskirts of Colfiorito, on the slopes of the Appennine mountains, provides shelter for 200 people forced out of their homes by the earthquake that struck central Italy in September 1997. They are facing a second Christmas in makeshift accommodation and are worried it will not be the last.

Further tremors over the past week have brought back bad memories and made them fear for their safety. While restorers are painstakingly piecing together art works in Assisi, reconstruction in the village of Colfiorito has not even begun. People fear they have been forgotten. The elderly are convinced they will end their days here and the young, if they can, are moving out.

One of the lanes in the camp is called Via della Speranza (Hope Street). There, Angela Forti, 86, lives at number 53 with his Polish-Italian wife, Yadvga. A slight man with twinkly blue eyes, he makes me welcome in the tiny space that functions as kitchen-dining-living room. On the walls are a Mussolini nostalgia calendar, a faded photo of Mr Forti as a young soldier and an assortment of icons and pictures of Our Lady.

"That earthquake destroyed 50 years of my life. My three-storey house was turned into a pile of rubble. They just bulldozed it away. I know they can't rebuild things overnight but I



Emergency housing near Colfiorito in the Apennines, where refugees from the 1997 earthquake are still waiting for government help to rebuild their lives **Brian Harris**

afternoon playgroup. Anna's house was not destroyed but two rooms are unsafe so the family are not allowed back. "We have applied for funds but who knows when there will be a decision. It doesn't matter if the subsidy doesn't cover the cost, as long as we can get approval to go ahead. For now we are stuck."

The first phase of the reconstruction provides government grants of up to £20,000 for people like Anna whose properties were only slightly damaged.

The second and more complex phase involves villages that have been entirely or partly destroyed. Technicians have to assess geological stability and safety factors before even considering architectural or aesthetic points. Only once this has been approved by the town councils and the regional authorities can individual projects be put forward. Town planners say if they get things finished in five years they will be doing well.

The concern here is that if the reconstruction takes too long, a village like Colfiorito which lives on agriculture and a few small factories, may drop off the map.

Once a bustling centre it is now deserted. The state highway that cut through town has been rerouted. There is a gaping 100-yard long hole where houses have been demolished; some are propped up with metal supports, others look unharmed but closer inspection reveals buckled walls and bent staircases. One of the few undamaged buildings is the Pizzeria del Pecoraro (the Shepherd's Pizzeria) but paying guests are a rarity these days. The owner, Bruno Ricci, an elderly version of the Marlboro Man, with grey stubble and bloodshot eyes, is bleak. "Colfiorito is not doing, it's dead. They've done nothing here and maybe there is no point," he says.

"In the past there was a big jolt then a few tiddlers and it was all over. This time, the earth hasn't stopped shaking. The big one is still to come. mark my words."

don't want to die in this container," he said.

Like many of his fellow camp dwellers, Mr Forti is sensitive about being seen as a victim. "We don't want hand-outs, just a helping hand," he said, warming his hands in front of a gas burner. "I bought that with my own money. My wife couldn't survive another winter with the electric heaters we had."

Much of Mr Forti's pension goes to pay Dora. A plump woman with a wrinkled face and rough hands she cooks, cleans and helps him look after his wife, who is seriously disabled after a stroke.

through Umbria and the neighbouring Marche region destroyed Dora's dream. She and her husband worked for 15 years at the Fiat plant in Turin and were planning to retire to Colfiorito.

"We had finished renovating our old house in late August and were waiting for our furniture to be sent down from Turin.

IN TOMORROW
Anne Hanley me
left homeless b

After the quake it was declared unsafe. We put all our savings into that house so even with a government grant it will be difficult to rebuild." She complains that her daughter, who is 16, already suffers pains in her joints because of the cold.

The situation in Colfiorito is similar to that in other camps scattered throughout the

ROW'S INDEPENDENT
 ets the restorers of
 y the Assisi earthqu

Appennines. The series of quakes that struck central Italy originally left 10,000 people homeless, though many slept outside their houses for fear rather than necessity. Today those whose houses suffered minor damage have gone back home, while others are staying with relatives or taking advantage of a government rent

St Francis' basilica.
ake. Photographs b

The Colfiorito camp organiser, Dante Amici, a postman, says the older residents are like uprooted plants. "They were used to a very active existence; tending their vegetable gardens, making their own wine,

WEDNESDAY REVIEW

and the Umbrians
by **Brian Harris**

fixing the tractor. Now they don't know what to do with themselves. I am not saying this causes them to die but it certainly doesn't help them to live."

Camp life for children is not much fun either. The Disney club, complete with Pocahontas tent, hundreds of videos and an enormous television, was a donation. This Christmas there will be more gifts of toys and clothes but space inside the pre-fabs is at a premium.

"We won't be putting out our Christmas crib and we won't be having a big family dinner because there isn't room," said Anna, as she mopped the Disney club floor prior to the

IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY REVIEW.

Anne Hanley meets the restorers of St Francis' basilica and the Umbrians left homeless by the Assisi earthquake. Photographs by Brian Harris

WILLIAMS

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Japanese debtors do a vanishing act

THE LOAN sharks had been calling for weeks, but it wasn't until they started talking about his wife that Yoshinari Shiozaki, the grilled octopus seller, decided that the time had come to disappear.

"They kept making threats and saying they were going to take her away to work in a massage parlour," he remembers. "It was just after the time when that company president was found in the mountains, murdered by the Yakuza [crime gangs]. I was afraid that I would go the same way or that they would get to my wife. On the day that the money was due, we did a yonige."

The word means "night disappearance", and in Mr Shiozaki's case it was rather simple. "We hired a car, and at midnight my wife, three children, mother-in-law and me just drove out of town."

"All we could think about was dying. We were driving along the expressway and my wife kept saying, 'Suppose I turn the wheel right into the traffic instead of left?'"

But the Shiozakis reached Tokyo safely where they entered the statistics, not as suicides or traffic casualties, but among the growing ranks of the vanished.

No one knows exactly how many Japanese choose to disappear, but the indications are

BY RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
in Tokyo

that their numbers are growing. The Tokyo *Yellow Pages* contains dozens of advertisements for removals companies offering euphemistic services such as "emergency moving" and "night-time removals".

This week sees the first episode of a new television drama, based on a series of successful films, about the adventures of a firm of *yonige* - "night vanishers", who help people in distress to escape without trace.

Most of the real-life vanishers are reluctant to talk, but one small firm reports that one in 20 of its moves are of people who want to disappear.

In the old days, customers were often women, fleeing violent husbands or lovers, or even eloping couples. These days, as in the case of Mr Shiozaki's escape from bankruptcy and debts, the reasons for *yonige* are increasingly economic.

"This kind of thing has always gone on, but it became much more common when the bubble economy came to an end about four or five years ago," said the manager of Ai-Ai Deliveries in Tokyo.

These days, the typical *yonige* clients are families. "We

take cash in advance," says another remover. "If anyone comes asking what happened to them, we tell them they switched to another car before they got to their destination."

According to police statistics, there was a 17 per cent rise in the number of professionals and managers reported missing last year. At the root of this alarming increase is Japan's recession: this week the government's survey of business morale showed that small and medium-sized manufacturers are more pessimistic than at any time since the polls began 31 years ago. On top of this, Japan is a difficult country in which to suffer failure - not because of a lack of appropriate legislation, but because of social attitudes to debt and bankruptcy.

"This is a country in which bankruptcy is regarded by many people as a crime," says Seichi Noguchi, who runs a voluntary group for small businessmen in financial trouble. "Nine out of 10 people have no idea about the legal measures which can be taken when a business is failing, and they don't understand that bankruptcy laws exist to help restructure a business."

Ten per cent of the people who consult Mr Noguchi have previously "vanished". Half of

them are single men, but half-like the Shiozakis - are families. "People who disappear have a much harder time than those who stay and face up to their problems," says Mr Noguchi, and the experience of the Shiozakis bears this out.

After disappearing from their home in the city of Nagoya in 1980, they began a new life in Tokyo, living in two small rooms. It was too dangerous to change their local residents' registration, which would have alerted their creditors - but without it, it was difficult to find a school for the children. "For three years, we were always on edge and afraid that the Yakuza would track us down," Mr Shiozaki remembers. "Whenever I went out I wore dark glasses."

Eventually, with much trepidation, he decided to return to Nagoya, to apologise to his business partners and creditors - although as a precaution he waited until after most of his financial liabilities had expired.

"I thought that they would spit on me and call me a fool, but the first thing they said was 'How are you, Shiozaki-san?' They helped me set up a new business, and I'm doing pretty well now. I realised that if you run away from something once, then you will be running away for the rest of your life."



A growing number of Japanese families are choosing to flee rather than face up to their problems. Rex Features

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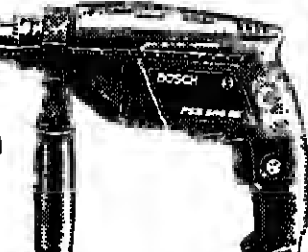
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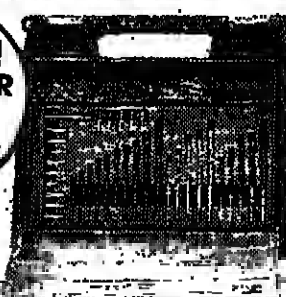
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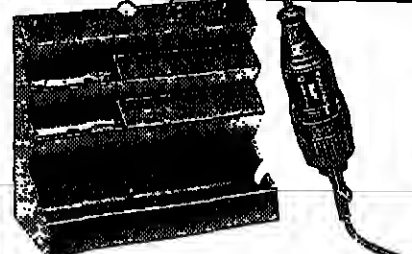


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We'll never copy West, vows Jiang

CHINA'S PRESIDENT, Jiang
Zemin, celebrated 20 years of
economic reform yesterday

BY TERESA POOLE
in Peking

with a vow that "from beginning to end, we must be vigilant against infiltration, subversive activities, and separatist activities of international and domestic hostile forces".

In the Great Hall of the People in Peking, set against a large golden hammer and sickle, Mr Jiang ruled out any shift from Communist ideology. "The system must not be shaken, weakened or discarded at any time," he said. "The Western mode of political systems must never be copied."

His words, on a day when the country was congratulating itself on the achievements of

"socialism with Chinese characteristics", offered no suggestion that the leadership believe economic reforms may lead to a pluralistic system. On the contrary, Mr Jiang said the authorities must oppose the "hostile" forces "with a clear-cut stand and resolutely nip them in the bud".

To that end, China on Thursday put on trial two leading dissidents, 32-year-old Wang Youcai and Qin Yongmin, 49. Both court hearings lasted just a few hours, and yesterday there was still no verdict or sentence.

Human rights activists expect the two men to receive heavy jail terms as punish-

ment for their attempt to register an opposition group, the China Democracy Party. Both defended themselves and pleaded not guilty to charges of "inciting the subversion of state power". Legal representation proved impossible after the police detained one lawyer who wanted to act for Mr Wang and gave Mr Qin only three days' notice of his court appearance.

Yesterday, Mr Jiang made it clear that the Communist Party would accept no opposition, and that any political reform must be "orderly and step by step" - and on the party's terms.

The 75-minute speech, before an audience of 6,000 top officials, was long on classic Chinese political rhetoric and short on any vision for the next stage of reform. The ruling Communist Party's policy of "seizing opportunity, deepening reforms, expanding, opening up, promoting development and maintaining stability is absolutely correct," Mr Jiang said.

Twenty years ago the late Deng Xiaoping set China on the path of economic reform after decades of disastrous central planning and a series of tragic political campaigns. The "reform and opening up" policies of Mr Deng transformed most people's lives.

IN BRIEF

Volcano threatens ice cap

A VOLCANO has erupted under Europe's highest glacier, spewing smoke and ash miles into the sky and threatening to melt large parts of the ice cap. Scientists said the eruption in Vatnajökull, on Iceland's south-east coast, would not endanger populated areas.

North Korean agent killed

SOUTH KOREA demanded an apology after reporting its warships and fighters had chased and sunk an intruding North Korean vessel, killing at least one North Korean agent in a firefight off the southern coast. The body of the armed North Korean agent was found close to where the vessel, which resembles a dark speedboat, was sunk before dawn in South Korean waters.

Poles to open Communist files

POLISH LEGISLATORS voted to override President Aleksander Kwasniewski's veto of a Bill that would allow victims of Communist-era repression to see their secret police files. Afterwards, Mr Kwasniewski's lawyer said the President would now agree to sign the measure.

Flu bug disrupts Pope's schedule

THE POPE has come down with the flu at the start of the busy Christmas season and cancelled his audiences with the Catholic patriarch of Iraq and a representative of the Arab League. The Pope is scheduled to celebrate midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.

DAVID USBORNE

If Kofi Annan asked me to scrub floors for him, I'd do it

IN THE SATURDAY REVIEW PAGE 5

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

AMP poised to win NPI auction

AMP, the Australian insurance group, is poised to win the bidding for NPI, the mutual insurer which put itself up for sale three months ago. Barring unforeseen last minute hitches a deal could be announced early next week. AMP is believed to have offered around £2.6bn, pipping rivals CGU and Britannia who yesterday effectively conceded defeat. NPI's 500,000 policyholders could be in line for windfalls averaging £1000.

Logica on £60m spending spree



LOGICA, the computer services group, yesterday splashed out over £60m on two acquisitions, taking its spending over the past few months to more than £100m. Logica is buying Aestus Communications, a Bristol-based software group specialising in pay-as-you-go mobile phone systems, for £47m and DDV, a Dutch telecoms and new media consultancy, for £15.6m. Martin Read, Logica's chief executive (pictured), said the acquisitions reinforced Logica's leading position in the telecommunications sector. The deals, combined with an upbeat trading statement, helped boost Logica shares 17p to an all-time high of 527p.

Corporate lending starts to slow

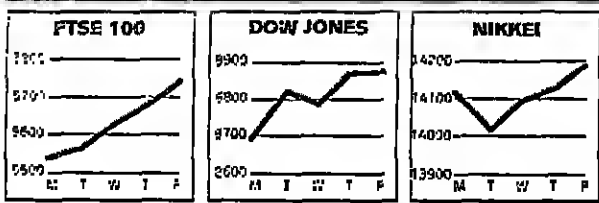
LENDING to the private sector is beginning to slow as businesses cut back on borrowing, according to official figures released yesterday. Lending of M4 - a broad measure of money supply - was just £1.5bn in November, the weakest figure since December 1996. Overall, M4 grew by 0.2 per cent last month, taking the annual growth rate to 8.4 per cent, the lowest since August 1995.

Separately, the British Bankers' Association (BBA) said total bank lending to the private sector rose by just £431m last month. According to the BBA, consumer borrowing is still strong, but there are signs of weakness in industry.

Liffe opens to outside investors

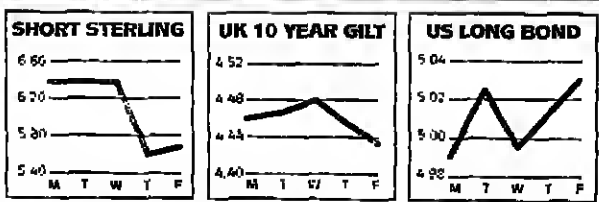
Liffe, the beleaguered City derivatives exchange said yesterday it would change its rules to allow outside shareholders who are not members of the exchange to invest in the business. The move is part of chairman Brian Williamson's drive to turn the exchange from being a member-run organisation to one which is focused more clearly on profits. Liffe is cutting 600 jobs as it shifts from open outcry to electronic trading.

STOCK MARKETS



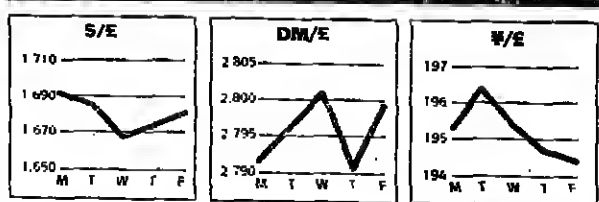
Index	Close	Change	%	52 wk high	52 wk low	Vol
FTSE 100	5741.90	56.70	1.00	6183.70	4598.20	3.27
FTSE 100	4711.20	15.80	0.33	5970.80	4247.60	4.90
FTSE 250	2709.60	33.30	0.99	2989.10	2210.40	3.51
FTSE All Share	2607.32	32.18	0.98	2896.52	2143.53	3.57
FTSE SmallCap	2016.00	3.90	0.19	2793.80	1834.40	4.12
FTSE MidCap	1121.80	1.70	0.15	1517.10	1046.20	0.00
FTSE AIM	793.40	-1.80	-0.23	1146.90	761.30	0.00
FTSE REIT 100	935.07	-6.10	-0.65			
Dow Jones	8878.14	2.32	0.03	9380.20	7400.30	1.69
Nikkei	14194.29	67.30	0.48	17352.95	12787.80	1.03
Hong Kong	10226.23	142.32	1.42	11926.16	6544.79	3.05
Dax	4629.23	-94.58	-2.00	6217.83	3633.71	1.92

INTEREST RATES



Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	2 year	5 year	10 year	15 year	Long bond	Vol
UK	6.38	-1.34	5.74	-2.01	4.43	-1.85	4.30	-1.94	
US	5.23	-0.67	5.00	-1.03	4.88	-0.93	5.03		
Japan	0.49	-0.25	0.54	-0.18	1.47	-0.46	2.16	-0.38	
Germany	3.32	-0.43	3.18	-0.86	3.83	-1.44	4.71	-1.15	

CURRENCIES



Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	2 year	5 year	10 year	15 year	Long bond	Vol
£/US\$	1.6809	+0.55	1.6451						
£/DM	2.7896	+0.15	2.9743						
£/¥	156.37	+0.46	151.94						
£/Index	100.10	+0.30	104.10						

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Chg	%	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	9.85	0.11	1.12	
Gold (\$)	290.45	-1.30	-0.45	
Silver (\$)	4.94	-0.03	-0.61	
GDP	115.40	3.00	112.04	Dec
RPI	164.40	3.00	159.61	Dec
Bone Rates	8.25	7.25		

TOURIST RATES

Index	Close	Chg	%	Yr Ago
Australia (\$)	2.6009			
Austria (schillings)	18.96			
Belgium (francs)	55.71			
Canada (\$)	2.5159			
Cyprus (pounds)	0.7970			
Denmark (krone)	10.32			
Finland (markka)	8.2645			
France (francs)	8.9598			
Germany (marks)	2.7098			
Greece (drachma)	454.01			
Hong Kong (\$)	12.58			
Ireland (pounds)	1.0850			
India (rupees)	64.33			
Israel (shekels)	6.4618			
Italy (lira)	2685			
Japan (yen)	189.03			
Malaysia (ringgits)	6.1357			
Malta (lira)	0.6076			

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

FSA chief quits after boardroom rift

RICHARD FARRANT, the chief operating officer of the Financial Services Authority, is in line for a £370,000 pay-off after a boardroom rift at the City watchdog which will result in his leaving in January.

Mr Farrant, the former chief executive of the Securities and Futures Authority, is the highest ranking casualty since the organisation began operations in June.

One of three managing directors sitting on the board

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

below chairman Howard Davies, he is only 15 months into a three-year contract and was on a salary of £210,000 a year.

His departure will almost certainly be seen as a sign of the tensions with the FSA as Mr Davies seeks to weld the various organisations which it has replaced into a single regulator.

Mr Farrant had a front-line

role at the FSA and was instrumental in ensuring that senior management at Barings were held responsible for the failures that led to the bank's collapse.

However, he was widely perceived as having lost out to the more charismatic Philip Thorpe, the New Zealander who ran Imro, the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation, when the top jobs at the FSA were shared out.

While Mr Thorpe now heads

the enforcement division which will be responsible for disciplining those who fall foul of the FSA's tough code, Mr Farrant was given a less glamorous organisational role, which now will be eliminated by the boardroom reshuffle.

Mr Farrant said yesterday that following the FSA's move to its new premises at Canary Wharf and the completion of the initial phase of staff recruitment his job had been largely done. He said that he and the FSA

chairman had been discussing for some time the possibility of moving into a new role handling the next stage of integration.

However, he had decided particularly in view of his experience when the old Securities Association merged with the Futures Association to create the SFA, to step aside.

Mr Farrant, 53, said that he had no other job to take up but would probably seek to remain within the financial services industry.



Richard Farrant: In line for a £370,000 payoff

Retailers fuel fresh gloom on high street

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

THERE WAS a fresh crop of bad news from some of Britain's largest retailers yesterday just a day after official retail figures showed that sales in November had been stronger than expected.

Littlewoods, the retail and football pools group, questioned the Government's statistics and said its own experience showed that there had been a marked slowdown in sales over the last two months.

Barry Gibson, Littlewoods chief executive said: "The Government's [retail] statistics are notoriously unreliable. They often have to be revised a couple of months later. Our figures show that things began to change in July and the consumers have stayed cautious, in spite of retail statistics coming down. The slowdown is across the board, across all our retail businesses."

His comments echoed statements made by John Lewis, which said that its department store sales in the week to 12 December were "substantially short of estimates". The figures were 3 per cent down on the same week last year.

Elsewhere, Harveys Furnishings, the textiles and furniture group reported flat profits for the six months to October and underlying sales down 4.7 per cent in the same period last year. While sales of smaller-ticket textile items have proved resilient, furniture sales are under sharp.

"Big ticket merchandise like furniture are deferrable pur-



Rod Templeman, Harveys Furnishings' managing director: "My worry is the feel-bad factor"

chases. People make do," said Rod Templeman, Harveys managing director. "Consumers may change their habits when the annual interest rate changes come into effect in January. But my worry is the feel bad factor. People are worried about losing their jobs and that will stop them spending."

UNO, the rival furniture retailer, has also suffered. Its shares plunged 20 per cent to a new low of 32.5p yesterday,

compared to their 272.5p level at the beginning of the year. The shares fell on a well-informed market source that one of its largest institutional shareholders had sold its entire holding of around 650,000 shares at just 20p, half the then market price.

Littlewoods said it is now three years into a five-year recovery plan but still has no intention to float the business. "We have no plans, not for the foreseeable future unless the

shareholders [the Moores family] change their minds."

The comments came as Littlewoods reported retail trading profits £5.5m lower at £33.7m for the six months to October. The high street Littlewoods stores recorded a loss of £6.4m in the period after the sale of 22 of its stores to Marks & Spencer.

A restructuring programme is expected to deliver savings of £50m over the next three years as it integrates head of-

fice functions and de-layers management roles.

The trial of stores under the Berkertex name will be dropped in January and all stores will continue to trade under the Littlewoods banner. But the merchandise will be adjusted to offer women's clothing aimed at 35 to 65-year-olds.

The agency mail order business recorded flat profits but losses were reduced by 10 per cent at the Index store and the Index Extra direct catalogue.

Equities chief goes part-time

PHILIP AUGAR, the head of equities at Schroders, the City merchant bank, is to go part-time in the New Year, writes Andrew Garfield.

Mr Augar, who joined Schroders four years ago from NatWest with a mandate to build up a UK and European equities capability for the firm, said he was taking time out to write a series of books about the City.

He denied that the decision was linked to any plans by Schroders to cut back on the business.

Mr Augar said: "We have delivered all we set out to deliver. A personal decision is not any sign of reduced commitment. I hope to stay at Schroders as long as I am welcome."

He added: "It would be odd

to be quitting equities in a year when we have more than doubled our market share, led a major privatisation in the telecoms sector, and moved into the top ten in the research rankings for UK and Europe."

As chairman he will continue to run the equities business three days a week. He raised eyebrows the length and breadth of the City when he left NatWest - which at the time was regarded as the one of the most powerful stockbroking firms in the City - after six years for a merchant bank which had tried and failed to build up a UK equities business once before.

Mr Augar, 46, plans to write two books: one on the impact of the "Big Bang" on the City and one on wider aspects of management.

Oil prices fall further as markets ignore Iraq raids

THE CONTINUED bombing raids on Iraq failed to register in the financial markets yesterday, where attention was firmly focused on the impeachment vote in the US House of Representatives.

Crude oil prices continued to flounder as it became apparent the raids had not halted the flow of Iraqi oil exports.

Oil prices slid by 11 per cent in New York late on Thursday night, while on London's International Petroleum Exchange, February Brent crude dipped below \$10 a barrel in afternoon trade.

Nick Stamenkovic, chief economist at Bank Austria Creditanstalt Futures, said: "With the supply overhang and the weak global economy, the outlook for the oil price continues to be poor."

BY LEA PATERSON

Stock markets were unperturbed by the strikes on Iraq, and major European bourses closed higher, spurred on by gains in Far Eastern markets overnight and a strong opening on Wall Street.

In London, the FTSE-100 index broke through the 5,700 barrier, closing up 1 per cent at 5,741.9, as fund managers embarked on a year-end buying spree.

One trader said: "It's quite common for fund managers to start buying heavily at this time of year to try and improve their showing by year-end."

Bank stocks were among the main gainers on the London Stock Exchange, while most oil stocks tracked crude prices

lower. BP closed down 10p at 878.5p, while Shell ended the day down 0.25p at 358p.

For most financial markets, particularly the foreign exchange markets, the main focus of attention was the impeachment vote.

Concern about the political future of President Bill Clinton weighed heavily on the dollar, which had fallen another 1.3 yen to 115.08 yen by lunchtime in New York.

Impeachment concerns also hit US government bonds for the second successive day, with the yield on 30-year Treasury bonds up 2 basis points at 5.03 per cent during afternoon Wall Street trade.

Mr Stamenkovic said: "If President Clinton does get impeached it will make the markets even more nervous."

The venture capitalists' bids are believed to be fronted by racing figures. Civen is thought to have the support of some of Coral's existing management, while Morgan Grenfell's has been rumoured to have enlisted Boh Green, a well-known bookmaker who used to head William Hill.

Industry experts believe that Civen and Morgan Grenfell could raise their bids further, putting a final price tag at around £400m on Coral. This would be well in excess of the £363m Ladbroke paid the brewing giant Bass in May for the Coral chain. The deal was blocked by the Trade Secretary Peter Mandelson four months later on competition grounds.

Mr Mandelson ruled that the Coral acquisition would have given Ladbroke, the UK's largest bookmaker, a dominant position in the £1bn a year betting market.

The minister ordered the hotel and gaming group to dispose of the shops within six months and urged to sell them to a single buyer to create a powerful "third force" behind Ladbroke and William Hill.

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

FOOTSE closed higher for the fourth day. After a volatile futures and options expiry the market settled down and blue chips moved steadily ahead. The index closed 56.7 points up at 5,741.9 but the supporting indices made much more restrained progress. BSKYB remained under pressure as more analysts cut profits estimates. The shares fell 15.5p to 468p. SmithKline Beecham, the drugs group, was also weak on talk it did not intend to barge into the AstraZeneca merger.

Derek Pain, page 21

NEW YORK

WALL STREET drifted in morning trade yesterday as the House of Representatives began the first presidential impeachment debate in 130 years. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up by 6.18 points at 8882.77 at lunchtime with advancing and declining shares about even on the New York Stock Exchange.

Drug shares fell after the Wall Street Journal reported that pharmaceutical companies are battling legislation in Congress that would cut the price Medicare recipients pay for medicines.

TOKYO

TOKYO STOCKS closed firmer on Friday, shuffling off the air raids on Iraq and reports of a shoot-out between a North Korean submarine and South Korean forces. The Nikkei 225 closed up 67.3 points at 14,194.29.

The overnight rally on Wall Street helped, as did news that the troubled builder Haseko has announced restructuring plans which will involve creditor banks writing off 394bn yen of its debts. Haseko shares inched up 3 yen to 62, although Mitsui Trust & Banking, one of the key lenders, saw its shares fall.

PARIS

THE CAC-40 Index ended down 59.25 points, or 1.55 per cent, at 3691.59 and down slightly on the week. There was little enthusiasm from investors, given the backdrop of possible impeachment for President Clinton, the Iraqi attacks and the forthcoming euro conversion. Share prices were also dragged down by weakness in oil stocks and in France Telecom.

Elf and Total contributed to about one fifth of the market's decline as Brent crude prices remained weak.

FRANKFURT

THE XETRA DAX gave up earlier gains to finish the day down 1.38 per cent at 4666.74, depressed by lacklustre trading in New York and falling bank shares. Dresdner Bank led the banks down, with its shares falling nearly 3 per cent on the day, ending their recent strong upward run.

The dominant news in the market was the announcement of a share swap between the two giant insurance groups Munich Re and Allianz. Munich Re's shares rose 2.5 per cent and Allianz was down 0.6 per cent on the day.

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52 week High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	52 week High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol
114	107	1st Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	1st Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	2nd Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	2nd Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	3rd Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	3rd Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	4th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	4th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	5th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	5th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	6th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	6th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	7th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	7th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	8th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	8th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	9th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	9th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	10th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	10th Nat	41.5	0.5	55

OTHER FINANCIAL

52 week High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	52 week High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol
114	107	1st Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	1st Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	2nd Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	2nd Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	3rd Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	3rd Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	4th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	4th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	5th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	5th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	6th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	6th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	7th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	7th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	8th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	8th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	9th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	9th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	10th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	10th Nat	41.5	0.5	55

52 week High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	52 week High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol
114	107	1st Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	1st Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	2nd Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	2nd Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	3rd Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	3rd Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	4th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	4th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	5th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	5th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	6th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	6th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	7th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	7th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	8th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	8th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	9th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	9th Nat	41.5	0.5	55
114	107	10th Nat	41.5	0.5	55	307	107	10th Nat	41.5	0.5	55

RECENT ISSUES

52 week High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	52 week High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol

SPORT

Those boring tennis players didn't get a look in

THEY GOT 500,000 telephone votes in the space of 10 minutes for last weekend's BBC Sports Personality of the Year. Think of it. Half a million people. Or, more accurately, 499,981 people, as my wife voted 20 times for Michael Owen.

That figure assumes, of course, that no one else in the country decided to sway the voting – or, as my wife would have it, decided to make sure that justice was done and those bloody boring tennis players didn't get a look in.

Where were you when you heard Greg Rusedski was Sports Personality of the Year? Can't remember? Neither can I.

It wasn't possible to find out what proportion of the vote went to Liverpool and England's 18-year-old hotshot. Figures of that kind simply weren't publicised, a BBC publicity



MIKE ROWBOTTOM

spokeswoman told me, because they might show that the winner had won by a huge margin, and the runners-up – in this case, Denise Lewis and Iwan Thomas from the world of athletics – might be upset about discovering their portion of the votes.

Now shoot me down in flames if you don't agree, but I think Lewis and/or Thomas would probably be able to master their tears in such a circumstance.

Be that as it may, I suspect young Mr Owen won by a very large margin – and rightly so.

The spokeswoman said there had been a complaint about the fact that the final topic to be reviewed in the programme before the telephone voting started – care of the same company that co-ordinates the Eurovision Song Contest – was the World Cup. Biased towards Owen, right? When she said a complaint, that was what she meant. The BBC has received one letter expressing this opinion. From a Mrs Henman. Not really.

What probably clinched the vote for Owen was the piquant contrast

between the jaunty young man who made a time-out signal to indicate he had hit the stanchion after converting his post-match penalty in the World Cup match against Argentina, and the defeated boy who stood with dark eyes hrimming after it was all over.

His was not a full-scale, shirt-wiping Gazza blub; but there were enough echoes of that emotive scene from the 1990 World Cup to access a similar well of public sympathy.

This week I found myself defending the award decision when a friend insisted Owen did not deserve it because it was all down to his efforts in just one game.

Just one game? Essentially, it was even less than that – just one goal. But what a goal, and at what a moment. Along with Dennis

Bergkamp's clinically precise effort for the Netherlands in the quarter-final, Owen's inspired incursion into Argentinian territory produced what many will remember as the goal of the World Cup.

You could argue that in terms of personality, Owen had less going for him than either of the athletes in his wake. Lewis, especially since her pre-Olympic photo-shoot in scarcely more than red, white and blue body paint, has become an increasingly high-profile figure with a natural warmth and vivacity. Beyond her competitive career, the world of television presenting beckons.

Thomas, with his Just William, through-a-hedge-backwards hairstyle, is a patently nice, affable bloke. His scattiness is also endearing, as BBC viewers discovered

after he had won the European 400m title in Budapest.

During the post-race interview, with a little prompting from fellow Welsh athlete Jamie Baulch, he gave those watching at home a glimpse of the hastily cut-down shorts he had had to wear under his running gear because he had run out of underpants.

Would Michael Owen ever appear in nothing except red and white bodypaint? I think not. Would Michael Owen ever run out of underpants? I think not.

Certainly not while the proud mum who cried during his award ceremony still holds sway over his smalls.

As for personality – the only clear public sense of that derives from the way he is on the pitch. Off the field his exuberance is kept

under careful check. In terms of the game he loves to play regularly with his dad, Owen always hits straight down the centre of the fairway.

His role model in this appears to be his captain in the England team, Alan Shearer, who also happens to share his kit manufacturer. Owen's short speech of acceptance last Sunday night was an object lesson. In it, he paid tribute to the team support he received for both club and country and concluded with the tabloid-esque reflection that the award was a nice early gift for his birthday the following day.

There was no need for anything fancy – it was just a case of having to tap the ball over the line. No wonder Glenn Hoddie, joining in the applause afterwards, could be seen mouthing the words "Well Done".

West put faith in magic of Monkley

Premiership strugglers aiming to build on first win with help from formidable New Zealand flanker. By Chris Hewett

IT IS REASONABLE to suggest that the vast majority of West Hartlepool rugby union supporters – always assuming the words "vast" and "majority" can be properly used in relation to the Premiership's smallest and least fashionable club – are currently unable to tell their Duane Monkleys from their Shane McDonalds. Happily, their ignorance is unlikely to survive much beyond the first couple of minutes of tomorrow's intriguing rumble with Northampton.

West have completed another of their raids on New Zealand rugby's bloodstock market and, this time, they have bought themselves some thoroughbreds. Suddenly, the paupers are up out of the gutter and heading for the bright lights. Well, sort of.

Monkley, routinely described as the finest Kiwi open-side flanker never to don an All Black jersey, and McDonald, the former Taranaki hooker, were set to work for their new employers at Bedford last Saturday and promptly laid the foundations for a victory of the campaign. OK, so it was not the Springboks they beat down at Goldington Road but when you have just spent four depressing months going 11-zip and shipping 467 points in the process, any win is a big win.

According to Mike Brewer, whose own All Black credentials could hardly be more impeccable, West are now equipped with a pack capable of going gumshield-to-gumshield with the best in the country.

"I'm confident we finally have the players to do the right things at the right moments in the right situations," said the player-coach this week. "In a very short space of time,

Shane has rectified some of our more obvious problems at line-out and scrum. And Duane? Well, he's just Duane. There aren't many like him. He's 32 now but I would unhesitatingly class him amongst the most effective open-sides anywhere in the world.

"He closes down the opposition, makes the big tackles, gets his hands on the ball and turns the other guy over in a flash. The way rugby is played these days, it's the good defensive sides that win the games; more often than not, four or five big turnovers are enough to get you the result. That's where Duane comes in; he's a mirror image of Neil Back in that he plays with such enormous zest and energy. I had to outbid Harlequins to get him here and it meant scraping the bottom of the barrel, but Jez, he's worth it."

Monkley spent last season playing for Western Province – now renamed the Western Stormers – the crack South African Currie Cup side, but British aficionados will know him better as one buzz-bombing third of the wonderful Waikato back row that took the 1993 Lions to the cleaners in Hamilton. John Mitchell, the Sale coach who also acts as Clive Woodward's second-in-command at England level, played No 8 to Monkley's No 7 that day and it was he who suggested that Brewer might reach for the chequebook.

"Actually, I originally had my sights on Eric Miller, who was very disaffected at Leicester," Brewer admitted. "But Eric made it clear that he wanted to go home to Ireland, so I contacted John and asked him if he had any ideas. He knew Duane



Mike Brewer (above), West Hartlepool's player-coach, has assembled a squad he believes can hold its own in the Allied Dunbar Premiership One, having added players such as (below, clockwise from top left) Shane McDonald, Kenneth Fourie, Mike Mullins and Duane Monkley. Tom Collins

had been a big success in Cape Town and that the Western Stormers were keen on playing him in next season's Super 12, but the South African Rugby Football Union see that competition as a Springbok testing ground, so the door was open.

"You might wonder why John didn't sign Duane himself, but he has an England Test flanker in Pat Sanderson and he probably reckoned it would be a backward step, given his own role in the Twickenham set-up. We were in a different situation; we needed some proven quality, some experience. Duane has a good two seasons left before his body starts asking him the difficult questions. My own body has already started and I'm getting the message loud and clear, but I think it's important that I carry on a while longer. I still get the adrenalin rush before a game and it just about makes up for the punishment I soak up during it."

In addition to all that New

Zealand know-how in the front and back rows, Brewer can also field a very useful second-row combination of Philippe Farner, the former Racing Club de Paris lock, and Mark Giachari, the Sydney-born veteran of Italy's 1995 World Cup campaign. "Because of injuries, they hadn't played together until we got to Bedford," said Brewer. "They're good players and they make a big difference to a club who have only 17 or 18 blokes who can really stack up against the leading Premiership teams."

"I'm not saying we've turned the corner, just because we won last weekend. But we've certainly stretched out our necks, peered round the wall and seen what the road ahead looks like. I certainly think we can avoid relegation, especially if the politicians stay true to their word and stick to the terms of the Mayfair Agreement, which this club signed up to and continues to support. As far as I'm concerned, it's

one down automatically and another in a play-off. We'll fight until we're blue in the face to keep that in place."

And Northampton, whose six wins from their last seven league outings have given them the sheen of title contenders? "Well, it's a major test for us, isn't it? They've tightened up their front five by recruiting Freddie Mendez at hooker and shifting Tim Rodder into the second row, and as a consequence they're playing a very physical game. But then, we've tightened up a bit ourselves. I hope they really come at us up front because we have a lot to offer back to them."

Ian McGeechan will know precisely how much; when Monkley produced his virtuoso display of Brit-bashing back home in Hamilton five and a half years ago, the Northampton coach was sitting in the front row of the Rugby Park stand. Suffice to say he regards it as the worst day of his Lions career.



QUOTES OF THE WEEK

At no stage did Wiseman accept that what he had done was wrong. He never said sorry and maintained that he had behaved correctly throughout.

Senior FA official on the meeting at which Graham Kelly resigned as chief executive and Keith Wiseman refused to as chairman.

When the full council met, the front row of the room was known as death row.

Senior FA official, following the Kelly's resignation, on the aged FA Council.

The very fabric of the great game is being damaged. Jagmohan Dalmiya, International Cricket Council president, on the match-fixing scandal.

It is important to do well at sport but remember it is only a sport that we are talking about. It is not as if someone has declared war on us.

Tony Banks, Sports Minister, on England's defeat in the third Test.

It's always been the same here: if you lose they give you funny looks all the time.

Graham Gooch, England manager, after the third Test.

The reason fans abuse me is because they are jealous of me. David Beckham, of Manchester United and England.

You know what I do when I'm right. I put people in body bags. Mike Tyson.

Saracens out to rock Bath at Rec

BY CHRIS HEWETT

SARACENS MAY still be the Allied Dunbar Premiership's answer to rock and roll – big crowds, flash marketing, dancing girls and Kyran Bracken – but it is some time since they made sweet music together. True, England's knock-out champions have staged a partial recovery from the trauma of heavy defeats at Harlequins and Newcastle by winning three of their last four games, but somehow their sense of rhythm continues to elude them.

That reality has not been lost on Francois Pienaar, whose decision to add the first-team captaincy to his bulging portfolio of duties at Vicarage Road caused a serious stir before last weekend's encounter with London Irish.

"Even though we won that match,

we performed a long way short of the level we regularly achieved last season," said the ambitious South African yesterday as he prepared for this afternoon's highly significant rumble with Bath at the Recreation Ground. "Bath might not be the force they were, temporarily at least, but if you win there you make an important statement of intent. Northampton did that last weekend and we must do something similar."

To that end, Pienaar has installed himself on the open-side flank in the absence of Richard Hill, whose masochistic penchant for thumb dislocations revealed itself again last Sunday. Troy Coker, equally hard but nowhere near as subtle as

his Springbok partner, returns to the blind side, while Bracken resumes at scrum-half after a back problem that cost him his England place.

For all that, much of the interest will be focussed on a complete unknown: David Flatman, an 18-year-old Sarries loose-head who caused London Irish all sorts of grief six days ago. "He's a star," enthused Mark Evans, the Londoners' director of rugby. "Just watch him go."

Victory over a Bath line-up shorn of Phil de Glanville, Jon Preston, Mark Regan and Richard Webster (all injured) as well as Ieuan Evans, Steve Harley and Ben Sturham (all dropped) would go at least some of the way towards re-establishing the visitors' title credentials. Even so, Leicester, the hot favourites, will under-

line the overwhelming strength of their own candidacy if they grind out a result at Gloucester, for whom the former Wales captain Kingsley Jones makes a first Premiership start in the back row.

It will be no cakewalk, not only because three automatic backline choices – Joel Stranksy, Will Greenwood and Nnamdi Enulike – are crocked, but because Richard Hill, the Gloucester coach, reacted so violently to last weekend's shambolic capitulation at Sale.

"We played without pride or commitment and I've made it clear that everyone will be playing for their places when they go in against Leicester," Hill fumed. "We had a big heart-to-heart on Monday to assess what went wrong, but it's the last

chance for these guys as far as I'm concerned. It's up to them to prove to themselves, to me and to the paying public that they deserve to be first choice." Pressure on, then.

Just as it will be at London Scottish, where Richmond need to stand up and be counted after four frustrating months of deceptive flattery. Their cause will hardly be helped by the absence of Ben Clarke, who fractured a cheekbone during last weekend's full-on scrap with Cardiff. With Scott Quinell back home with Llanelli, the Londoners' back row has a brittle look to it. "Let's just say Ben's injury is a great disappointment to us," said John Kingston, their coach, as he weighed up his options yesterday. Problems, problems.

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... at Warwick could have done wonders for his confidence.

Deadline has Thorpe's back to wall

GRAHAM THORPE has been told that he must play in the Sharjah Trophy in early April if he is to be considered as a serious candidate for the World Cup finals in England next summer.

David Graveney, the England chairman of selectors, stressed that the Surrey left-hander, who is recuperating in England, has been set the deadline to prove his fitness following the back problem that

CRICKET
BY MYLES HODGSON
in Hobart

ended his involvement in the Ashes tour before the third Test. Thorpe has also been ruled out of the limited-overs triangular series next month involving England, the hosts Australia and Sri Lanka.

A back injury also forced Thorpe out of the final two

matches of the summer's triumphant home series against South Africa, in addition to the one-off Test with Sri Lanka at The Oval.

"We are hoping that we will be having some good news about Graham over the next couple of months because he is a loss to England at both Test and one-day cricket," Graveney said. "In one-day cricket, especially, I believe we have missed in the last year the way

he is able to knock the ball around in the middle of the innings and make life difficult for the bowlers.

"He is a key player - but he appreciates that he would have to go to the Sharjah Cup in order to be a valid selection for the World Cup. He has only just come back home and at present is getting over the disappointment of not being involved in Australia. A specialist will be looking at his back in the coming days and then we will go from there."

England fly out to Sharjah on 29 March and, after warm-up matches, open the competition proper against India on 7 April.

Warren Hegg, England's so-far frustrated reserve wicket-keeper, has dismissed claims that his captain, Alec Stewart, is struggling to cope with the triple workload of leading the side, being a front-line batsman and keeping wicket.

Hegg's role as reserve keeper has come increasingly into focus in the last few weeks as Stewart struggled to make an impression with the bat - his unbeaten 63 on the final day of the third Test in Adelaide was only the second time he had reached double figures in six Ashes innings.

That uncertainty was heightened by Stewart's surprise omission from the start of today's four-day match in Ho-

bart against an Australian XI featuring nine Test players. He is being rested in advance of the back-to-back Tests in Melbourne and Sydney.

But as much as the Lancashire player might cherish the opportunity to replace Stewart behind the stumps in either of the final two Tests, Hegg admits that a return to form by Stewart would be the best Christmas present England could hope for as they at-

tempt to salvage some pride from a series which can no longer be won.

"A lot of people have speculated that it has been too much for him, but I know Stewie, and he is a tough character," Hegg said. "Maybe it has affected him and maybe it is a big ask to do all three jobs. Who knows if that is the reason why we're two down in the series, but there are other factors involved as well."

Warne likely to miss rest of Ashes series

SHANE WARNE is almost certain to miss the final two Tests of the Ashes series despite recovering from his shoulder injury, according to Allan Border, who is now an Australian team selector.

Border said yesterday that Warne was improving steadily but had yet to find his best form.

"He's probably just a few weeks from bowling somewhere near his best, so that will count him out of the test series," Border said.

"It would have been nice for him to make his big entrance at the MCG for the fairy-tale comeback, but it doesn't look like it's going to happen."

Border said any pressure on Warne to make a hasty return had been lifted after Australia retained the Ashes by winning the third Test in Adelaide. Border also said the selectors were lucky to have such a credible replacement in the leg-spinner Stuart MacGill.

Surgery on Warne's shoulder has prevented him playing Test cricket since the third match against India in March.

He returned to first-class cricket last month and will play for Victoria against New South Wales in a Sheffield Shield match starting at the Sydney Cricket Ground today.

MacGill, who plays for New South Wales, withdrew from that match yesterday to rest a hamstring injury, but is certain to be ready for the fourth Test.

It had been hoped that Warne would be fit enough to make his Test return in the fourth Test at the MCG, starting on Boxing Day. If he misses that match, he is almost certain to miss the fifth and final Test which begins in Sydney on 2 January.

Thick fog again made play impossible on the second day of the third and final Test between Pakistan and Zimbabwe at Faisalabad yesterday. The tourists lead the series 1-0, having won the first Test in Peshawar.

Play was also abandoned on the first day of the first Test between New Zealand and India at Carisbrook yesterday after bad light and persistent drizzle.

Northamptonshire sign up Hayden

THE AUSTRALIAN batsman Matthew Hayden has signed as Northamptonshire's overseas player for next year, and will also captain the county.

The 27-year-old left-hander from Queensland has agreed a two-year playing contract and succeeds Kevin Curran as captain with wicketkeeper David Ripley as his deputy.

Hayden, who made the last of his seven Test appearances for Australia in South Africa nearly two years ago, had a successful season on the County circuit with Hampshire in 1997.

He scored 2,426 runs in all competitions, including 1,438 in the Championship with four

centuries. Speaking from his home in Brisbane, Hayden said: "I'm very excited about this. I enjoyed my summer with Hampshire and I just hope I can make a really good fist of it for Northants."

"Obviously there's a whole new set-up at the club, with my appointment a part of that, and I'm looking forward to meeting up with all the players when I arrive in April."

Ripley, who made his debut for Northants in 1984, becomes the club's first officially appointed vice-captain since Alan Fordham in 1996.



James Fisher and Traxdata Duenna tackle an obstacle in the Perton Signs Holly Pairs Relay at Olympia yesterday

Peter Jay

Bourdy enjoys his champagne moment

HUBERT BOURDY, a member of the winning French team at the World Equestrian Games in 1990, jumped a swift clear round to win yesterday's Champagne Taittinger Christmas Cracker Stakes on the second day of the Olympia Show Jumping Championships.

In a cosmopolitan jump-off between five horses (not one of them ridden by a British rider), Bourdy rode the nine-year-old mare Medline Van't Paradis to defeat Ireland's Peter Charles

EQUESTRIANISM
BY GENEVIEVE MURPHY
at Olympia

on Traxdata Nustria, who was runner-up in last year's Volvo World Cup qualifier here but has had most of this year off.

Nustria, who is still only eight, had a few months' rest at the start of this year but sustained a serious over-reach when striking his near foreleg with a hind toe at the Pavarot-

ti Horse Show in June. The injury required surgery and another long lay-off.

His polished performance yesterday left Charles ahead of Dutchman Jos Lansink on Nisan Zandor and Ludger Beerbaum (the European champion from Germany) on Champion de Lys. Beerbaum seemed already in possession of the top prize as he headed to the last jump-off fence on the nimble eight-year-old grey stallion, only to have the last rail down

in a time that was the fastest by 2.64sec.

On Thursday night Champion de Lys left the fences intact to give Beerbaum victory in the P&O Christmas Tree Challenge, thwarting John Whitaker who looked on course to secure the second leg of an opening day double until the galloping German relegated him to runner-up.

Beerbaum has ridden the French-bred Champion de Lys for 16 months and achieved sig-

nificant victories with the stallion (notably in the derbies at Hamburg and Monterrey) before coming to Olympia. On Thursday night he defeated a splendid round from John Whitaker and 19-year-old Virtual Village Welham, who had been the Yorkshireman's probable mount for today's Traxdata World Cup qualifier.

Whitaker, however, decided that 19-year-old Grannusch, with whom he won on Thursday, is feeling marginally better

than Welham and he will therefore ride him in today's major contest which, surprisingly, Whitaker has never yet won.

OLYMPIA INTERNATIONAL SHOW JUMPING CHAMPIONSHIPS: Champagne Taittinger Christmas Cracker Stakes 1 Medline Van't Paradis (H Bourdy, F) clear, 32.65sec; 2 Traxdata Nustria (P Charles, H) clear, 36.59; 3 Nisan Zandor (J Lansink, H) clear, 38.34; 4 Champion de Lys (L Beerbaum, G) clear, 38.34; 5 Virtual Village Welham (J Whitaker, G) 38.78.

BRITISH EQUESTRIAN WRITERS' ASSOCIATION AWARDS: Equestrian Personality of the Year: C Burt. Wholeness: Best Player for Most Outstanding Young Rider: K From. Liz Dearden Trophy for Contributions to Equestrian Sport: P Macdonald.

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League warns against creatine

THE RUGBY League is to warn its member clubs not to advise players to take the dietary supplement, creatine.

The substance, which is not on the banned list issued by the International Olympic Committee or the UK Sports Council, was revealed by a recent survey in *The Independent* to be in widespread use in the sport.

"We have been in constant touch with the Sports Council about creatine," said the League's chief executive, Neil Tunncliffe. "They have come back to us again this week and told us that it is OK, but we are going to contact our clubs to warn them to be very careful about recommending it to their players. If it turns out, in years to come, that it has all sorts of side-effects, players could sue clubs which have encouraged them to take it."

The League has also held talks with the Players' Association about the substance, which is also widely used in other sports to combat fatigue. Italy's claim to the world cup place in the 2000 World Cup could be strengthened by an international Sevens tournament there next year. Twelve countries, including a Great Britain side, are to compete in the event in Padua in November.

RUGBY LEAGUE
BY DAVE HADFIELD

Italy is one of the nations vying for the vacant 16th place in the World Cup, the draw for which is to be made before the World Nines in South Africa in February.

Sheffield Eagles' Great Britain centre, Keith Senior, has agreed a new contract extension that will keep him with the club until after the 2001 season.

Senior, who played in all three Tests against New Zealand this autumn, would be much sought after if he was on the market, but said yesterday that Sheffield's recruitment this winter had made him keen to stay at his only professional club.

"He is one of the game's top

centres and by the end of his contract he will be the best in the country," said the Sheffield coach, John Kear.

Either of the consortia which could take control of the struggling Doncaster club will have to reapply for membership of the League.

"We are becoming increasingly concerned about the future of the club," said Tunncliffe. "If there is a takeover, we will be exercising our rights under the by-laws by asking them to reapply."

Doncaster are included in the fixtures for next season, but the League will want evidence they can fulfil their programme before confirming their participation.

Gerg wins her first World Cup downhill

THE OLYMPIC slalom champion, Hilde Gerg of Germany, tamed a treacherous course to claim the first World Cup downhill win of her career in Verbena, Switzerland, yesterday.

Gerg took the rock-hard 3,500 metre piste in 1min 41.13sec, giving Germany its first win of the season in the absence of the injured Olympic downhill champion, Katja Seizinger.

The Swedish veteran Pernilla Wiberg, who called the Piste de l'Ours a "Kitzbühel for women" and said it was the most difficult she had ever raced on, took second in 1:41.55.

Norway's Lasse Kjus won the second World Cup downhill of the men's season in Val Gardena, Italy, yesterday.

The former overall World

SKIING

Cup champion was surprise fastest in the Val d'Isère downhill last Saturday and proved that was no fluke with a provisional winning time here of 2:02.18, nearly a second faster than anyone else.

Austria's Werner Franz was second in 2:03.09 and his compatriot Hermann Maier, overall World Cup champion, was third in 2:03.28 after starting from 31st position on a Saslong piste that has always favoured the gliders.

Kjus is the first Norwegian to win in Val Gardena since Ate Skardal in 1990 and his winning margin of 0.91sec was the widest since William Besse won in 1992.

McManus comes back from shadows

SNOOKER'S FORGOTTEN man Alan McManus won a name for himself once more in the semi-finals of the Irish Open in Dublin late on Thursday.

It has been two years since the 27-year-old Scot survived the last four of a ranking tournament. But s-5-3 success over countryman Billy Snaddon, the world number 33, bridged that gap for the gritty Glaswegian.

"I've been lacking in confidence," admits McManus, whose early wins at the National Basketball Arena came at the expense of in-form Dave Harold - the UK and Grand Prix semi-finalist - and Welshman Paul Davies.

"At the UK I lost to a kid I'd never even seen before [Michael Holt], yet against

SNOOKER

Dave it was a tough game I could easily have lost but I ended up winning," said the 1996 Thailand Open Champion.

"I had several alterations made to my cue during the summer and I'd be lying if I said it hasn't affected me. It's only now I'm getting used to the changes," said McManus, whose cue oow has a new ferule and a joint in the butt.

Opposing McManus will be Malta's Tony Drago who came back from 4-2 down to win 5-4 against world number two Stephen Hendry. "Tony has always possessed loads of talent but now he's starting to put matches away against the top players," added McManus.

League in control of cast-off Bullets

BASKETBALL
BY RICHARD TAYLOR

THE BASKETBALL League has taken control of Birmingham Bullets following the decision by the club's owner, Harry Wrubleski, to return to Australia and the breakdown of takeover talks with the Nottingham-based Alladin Group.

The League's chief executive, Mike Smith, emphasised there is no threat to the existence of one of the Budweiser League's best-supported and most financially secure clubs: "The Birmingham franchise is important to the League and we are committed to running it for however long it takes to find new owners. There is no pressure or timescale."

"Coach Mike Finger and all of the backroom staff stay in place for the day-to-day running of the club and we will oversee the operation for them."

The recent death of his mother and an incident in which he was beaten up outside a restaurant - something he has never fully recovered from emotionally or physically - are believed to have influenced Wrubleski's decision to return to Australia with his family after seven years in England.

Birmingham's home venue at the NEC Arena hosts tomorrow's National Cup semi-finals as Newcastle Eagles play Greater London Leopards, and Sheffield Sharks take on the holders, Thames Valley Tigers.

THE SWEEPER

BY CLIVE WHITE AND NICK HARRIS

Blasphemy rife in Christian League

IF WALTER SMITH thinks his Everton players are harshly treated by referees in the Premiership, he should try managing in the southern area Christian League.

Marshall Baron, the club secretary of Richmond St Mary's, recently suffered the humiliation of seeing his entire team sent off – for swearing.

Practising what one preaches has proved difficult for Baron, who was among those sent off minutes from time against Chessington Evangelical Church at Old Deer Park.

"It was a complete farce," he said. "I admit I said 'Jesus Christ' and should have been sent off. I am not saying we were angels, but we object to the fact that the game was abandoned entirely and we were punished and Chessington were not – there was swearing on both sides."

Apparently, industrial language was only the half of it, according to Baron, an altar server at Richmond Parish Church. He claimed that trouble flared when a Chessington player went unpunished after committing eight vicious fouls.

"One of my players warned the ref he would be held responsible if someone was seriously hurt by this player," said Baron, who left the field concussed and with a sore leg to go with his red card.

"Then a Chessington player asked one of my team what he knew about being a Christian."

"He told him: 'sod off. I'm a Roman Catholic'."

Richmond also had another player booked after the game had been abandoned, but at least they got one point out of five for sportsmanship; Chessington got four.

The Richmond-based team, who have all been friends since their schooldays at St Paul's and Westminster, also had a point docked, which they are now appealing against.

As for Baron, he has resigned from his position as League representative for the club.

"I have been playing in the League for 10 years and am held as an honest person. We are very sad that it all happened, and still feel very hard done by."

"The team, many of whom are my old friends, are not all Christians

and we realise swearing is not acceptable in a Christian League – but neither is dangerous tackling."

BEDLINGTON TERRIERS dipped out of the spotlight in more ways than one during the past seven days when their FA Vase third round tie against Mick-leover Sport was abandoned, not once, but twice, because of floodlight failure.

The Terriers, whose brave FA Cup run came to an end at Scunthorpe last Saturday week, looked light years ahead of the opposition when the lights failed last Saturday while they were leading 4-1.

Their manager, Keith Perry, warned against complacency in the replayed tie at the Doctor Pit Welfare Ground on Wednesday and he was spot on. With 18 minutes to go, it was the turn of the Derbyshire side Mick-leover to step out of the shadows and establish a three-goal lead. When they and everyone else were again plunged into darkness.

The FA is now considering whether to allow Bedlington to go for a hat-trick by staging the game again.

SONG SHEET

A cocky Manc rant

"We're the pride of all England, The cock of the North, We hate the cockneys, and scousers of course, AND LEEDS!"

STEVE BRUCE has endeared himself to Blades' supporters however well or badly his Sheffield United side fare this season in the First Division promotion race.

Pride of place on the wall of the manager's office at Bramall Lane

are two photographs of Bruce in goalscoring mode for Manchester United in the game which some people feel secured them the Premiership title in 1992. The side on the receiving end of Bruce's brace was Sheffield Wednesday.

DAVID O'LEARY and Peter Ridsdale, the Leeds manager and chairman respectively, appeared to be on a collision course over the club's image if recent comments from the two are anything to go by.

At a welcome dinner for the new manager and his assistant Eddie Gray, Ridsdale told the gathering: "We have had a fairly interesting start to the season, with the odd change we didn't expect, but the great thing is that sexy football is no longer at Newcastle, it is here at Leeds United!"

A few days later O'Leary, commenting on the team's style of play, said: "I don't want any of this 20 or 30 passes going nowhere. What we want here is purposeful football, not this sexy football."

EVERTON FANS thought it was a wind-up perpetrated from the other side of Stanley Park when it was announced a video had been released of Goodison's greatest goals. But no, in fact, it did exist and was called "Everton – 300 Great Goals" and produced by a company called Tracks.

But upon investigation it transpired that the video had been withdrawn for what reason no one seems to know. Rumour has it that the makers wanted to include a Goodison goal from this season, but eventually grew tired of waiting.

THE FOOTBALL Conference is emerging as one of the most important breeding grounds for the top marksmen of tomorrow, according to the latest issue of *Four Four Two*. The January edition profiles "The Top Twenty Strikers Outside the Premiership", of which seven are graduates from the Conference coaching academy. But prospective buyers should not expect a bargain – the magnificent seven would cost a projected £10.3m according to the magazine's valuations.

AS YOU WERE



WHAT WAS Garry Bushell (above, front centre-right) doing on the Oldham Athletic 1967 summer tour of Africa? Perhaps the former Oil-boy was about to perform a *Gotcha* on Ian Douglas Smith, the Rhodesian Premier, as advance footage for an episode of *Noel's Christmas Accidents*? But hold on – we tell a lie – it's not Bushell, at all. Surely we're off up the evolutionary scale a division or two to Oliver Reed, thespian and ambassador for abstinence. No, wrong again. Maybe it's the Duke of Kent, taking a break from those arduous clap-like-a-seal-on-creatin Wimbledon duties? No? We give up. It's Ken Bates, the (nowadays, left) Santa-look-a-like chairman of Chelsea.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

THE SWEEPER'S STOMPING CERTAINTIES

WITH ONLY the slightest assistance from the almighty – two late equalisers and a missed penalty – *The Price is Right* roared back into profit with a draws treble last week. There are some tight Premiership games gagging for similar attention this week, while Nicolas Anelka could spearhead a "Desmond" (2-2) draw against Leeds tomorrow.

LIBERO WAGERS

(10 £1 trebles with Stanley); Chelsea to draw with Tottenham (12-5); Coventry to draw with Derby (9-4); Newcastle to draw with Leicester (12-5); Nottingham Forest to draw with Blackburn (12-5); Southampton to draw with Wimbledon (9-4); Man United v Middlesbrough Correct score/first goal double: 2-1/ Dwight Yorke (50p at 30-1, Stanley).

West Ham v Everton

Correct score/first goal double: 2-1/ John Hartson (50p at 33-1, Stanley & Tote).
SUNDAY SKY MATCH
Arsenal v Leeds
Score: 2-2 (£1 at 14-1, generally).
First goal: Nicolas Anelka (£1 at 11-2 Stanley).
SUNDAY C4 ITALIAN JOB
Sampdoria v Milan
Score: 1-1 (£1 at 11-2, William Hill).

First goal: Oliver Bierhoff (£1 at 4-1, William Hill & Tote).
MONDAY SKY MATCH
Charlton v Aston Villa
Score: 1-2 (£1 at 8-1, Stanley & Tote).
First goal: Dion Dublin (£1 at 5-1, Tote).
ORIGINAL BANK: £100.
CURRENT KITTY: £134.06!
TODAY'S BETS: £18.63 (inc. £1.63 tax).

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

BEST ATTACK in Europe. Manchester United, Roma? Wrong. It's Anorthosis Famagusta of Cyprus. And the best defence – parsimonious Parma? Sorry, Parmalat boys, it's Hapoel Haifa of Israel.

BEST ATTACKS

	Goals	Games	Average
1 Anorthosis Famagusta (Cyprus)	47	12	3.92
2 Dinamo Bucharest (Romania)	37	17	3.35
3 Litex Lovech (Bulgaria)	46	13	3.20
4 Omónia Nicosia (Cyprus)	38	12	3.17

WORST ATTACKS

	Goals	Games	Average
1 Echinos Pireas (Greece)	3	13	0.23
2 Venezia (Italy)	5	13	0.38
3 Veria (Greece)	5	13	0.38
4 Casakale Dardanelspor (Turkey)	5	16	0.50

BEST DEFENCES

	Goals	Games	Average
1 Hapoel Haifa (Israel)	3	12	0.25
2 Real Mallorca (Spain)	5	14	0.36
3 Inter Bratislava (Slovakia)	6	15	0.40
4 Parma (Italy)	6	15	0.40

WORST DEFENCES

	Goals	Games	Average
1 Hapoel Beit Sh'an (Israel)	39	12	3.25
2 Aris Limassol (Cyprus)	38	12	3.17
3 Sagard (Norway)	30	26	3.08
4 Dona Kacokopia (Cyprus)	36	12	3.00

MY TEAM



PETER HOWITT
MANCHESTER UNITED

Actor and film director (*Sliding Doors*) "I'm one of the few fans who comes from Manchester. We moved to London when I was very young but saw them at Old Trafford during the Sixties. It was my mum's her fault I missed out on the European Cup Final in 1968 when United beat Benfica 4-1 at Wembley. She applied for tickets but they were £9 and she thought they were too expensive and I didn't go. The best goal I've seen at Old Trafford was a Bessie goal against Sheffield Wednesday in 1970. He beat the whole team, stopped the ball on the line and tapped it in. I think my proudest moment was when Denis Law asked for my autograph for his wife."

IN T'NET

Found on the Web: The home page of the England 2006 World Cup bid. If it's a balanced and unbiased appraisal of England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup you're after, it's best to go elsewhere, but if you want to fly the flag, read all about why England is the one and only country that really is fit to stage the cup, and get a blow by blow account of all the foreign junkies FA luminaries have been on in the course of duty, head here. Never have so many travelled so far, pressing so much flesh for so long in pursuit of a tournament that was promised to the Germans. By whom? The English FA, of course. <http://www.f2006.org/>

SEEN BUT NOT BOUGHT

WHY WOULD anyone want to buy a nine carat gold Sheffield Wednesday stick pin? Especially when the pins – a choice of small Owls on pins or the word "Owls" on a pin or a club badge on a pin – start at £27.99 and can cost as much as £39.99. Why would anyone at all, even an Italian striker, want to own such an item? Why would he use such an item to stick into his referee's toy? He would not, of course. And neither would any other sensible person.

THEY'RE NOT ALL DENNIS BERGKAMP

Unsung foreign legionnaires No 18 AMARA SIMBA: The Senegal-born French international striker will celebrate his 37th birthday next week as a player at Leyton Orient, the club he joined for nothing in October. Simba's illustrious career has seen him play for, among others, Paris St Germain, Caen and Marseilles (where at one stage he partnered Eric Cantona). He played for 18 months in Mexico before joining the Os, for whom he has played eight games and scored two goals so far. Simba has played four times for France, including one substitute appearance against England, and has scored a total of two international goals.



Fun and games in after-midnight sports marathon

I NEVER bothered to get my telly returned to receive Channel 5 – no puns, I thought, sniffily. So it was not until recently, when I invested in a new set, that I was able to enjoy its sports coverage. In fact, as the end of the year approaches, and bric-a-bracs and bouquets are ditched out, my personal gong goes to CS for their excellent and varied programming, which has been especially vigorous in its coverage of American sport.

Live And Dangerous, their after-midnight sports marathon, has been of a consistently high quality, and is probably why Channel 4's *Under The Moon* passed away unlamented this week. On Thursday, for example, LAD presenters Kevin Day and Mark Webster (slightly laddish but not overbearing) so first conducted some intelligent conversation with Carlton Palmer (quiet at the back), then spoke to the author of a book about the history of refereeing, and to an odds-maker about the latest football betting (the 8-1 about Dynamo Kiev

CHRIS MAUME

SPORT ON TV



to win the European Cup being considerably inferior to the 14s secured by myself and a colleague – an optimistic bet, perhaps, though somewhat less so than my friend's flutter on QPR to win the First Division at 200-1. Later, there was a top-of-the-table Dutch game between Vitesse and Feyenoord, and later still (past my bedtime, anyway), action from the latter stages of the Brazilian championship between Santos and Cruzeiro. All very late, but then that's what videos are for.

Apart from the football from around the

world, there has been what must have been baseball's best ever season – much of it live – NHL ice hockey and American football (the latter not to my taste, but it's good to have as a baster against Sky). As I say, I fondly imagined my life was better without CS. And indeed, with the exceptions of the sport and *Xena: Warrior Princess* (for fetish fans everywhere) that's the case. But they're two big exceptions.

And so farewell to *Under The Moon*, that dire late-night farrago of crap chat and embarrassing set-ups. Co-presenter Danny Kelly seemed a nice enough bloke, but it became all too familiar an experience to flip channels briefly before going to bed to find him wide-eyed and vacant, all rabbits and headlights while he waited for a thought to enter his head. A succession of co-anchors provided little in the way of substance and a great deal in the way of mindless dross.

The programme's low point (at least, the lowest point witnessed by this viewer,

which might not be saying all that much) was the occasion last year when they gave the former Greg Chappell as long as he liked to plug his "hair replacement system" – though I suspect it was not so much a question of product placement as of Kelly not being able to think of anything else to say and there being no post-pub morons clogging up the phone-in lines with their lager-lout prejudices. Wednesday's programme, so a friend informed me, contained a fitting epitaph when one caller rang in to inform Kelly's colleague, Lisa Rogers, that his preferred mode of watching her was with the remote in one hand and, er, something else entirely in the other.

A few sour sorts have spent the past week carping about the gong given to Michael Owen's for being voted BBC Sports Personality of The Year. Unlike Iwan Thomas, Denise Lewis and the rest of the shortlist – and as the lad himself has reiterated tirelessly over the last couple of weeks – he's won nothing yet.

Except the hearts of the nation, and that's what counts. The award has seldom been given for sporting success – indeed, it has consistently served to buttress that quintessentially British notion of glorious defeat. The Sports Writers' Association gave their awards last Monday to Thomas and Lewis, both bedecked with precious metals after a year of solid achievement. And rightly so – that's precisely what the sportswriters should be doling out awards for.

But public opinion is another matter entirely, and the Sports Personality of The Year award should be about precisely that: personality. The award is not about success so much as capturing the popular imagination – witness Paul Gascoigne's award in 1990, received largely on the back of his World Cup waterworks. Owen at least got his gong for football – at least, the five seconds or so it took him to score his tumultuous goal against Argentina.

In that moment, and as he subsequently raced towards the England end with his

hands held out in front of him, almost in supplication to God for allowing him to execute such a magnificent piece of artistry, the strange sculpture that passes for the BBC trophy became his personal property.

As for the rest of the *Sports Review Of The Year* (BBC1, Sunday), 'tis the season to be generous, so perhaps I should finish before I start. Perhaps it is a reflection of the BBC's deteriorating relationship with sport, but it was a curiously low-key affair – the audience looked glum, the interviews were bland and perfunctory and the comic relief, provided as it was by the impressionist Kevin Connolly, was grimly unfunny, though the impersonations themselves, as usual, were quite brilliant.

And finally... last week I wrote about the BBC's *They Think It's All Over*. Walker's would like me to point out that Gary Lineker is still under contract to them, and also that their crisps are not "fried in lard and chemicals". And my favourite flavour is roast chicken.

Books for Christmas: Football's great attackers weave their magic across the spectrum from high art to low life

Honesty of Adams and Best hits spot

JUST AS televised football is best watched with a beer to hand, good books are traditionally accompanied with a mug of cocoa. This is something of a blessing when it comes to reading the year's two blockbusters.

While both Bestie, the authorised biography of George Best and Addicted, Tony Adams' ghosted autobiography, are good reads, neither should be savoured over a pint.

Alcoholism is at the heart of Adams' book and a running thread through Best's. Much of Adams' book is standard fare. A hard-hitting opening chapter is followed by a pacy run through his career from aspiring schoolboy to trophy-winning captain of the Arsenal. There is even the obligatory chapter selecting his "best of" XI. What marks it out is that the opening chapter really does shock as it details his personal rock bottom, the moment he faced the reality that booze had taken over his life. Searingly honest, the book benefits from Adams' close relationship with his conscientious and understanding ghost, Ian Ridley.

Freed from the constraints of writing in someone else's words, Joe Lovejoy's Bestie is a more complex book combining the necessary chronological run through Best's career with modern-day snap-shots of his current life. Best and a long line of former team-mates, ex-lovers and friends, have co-operated in full but the result is as severe on Best's faults as Adams is on himself. A tawdry night in a Hereford bar, when a drunken Best's jealousy turns him into an arrogant boor, shows what Adams has escaped and Best probably never will. That his mother died an alcoholic underlines the tragic nature of his disease.

Alcohol abuse also plays a prominent part in the year's most controversial book, Glenn Hoddle's My World Cup Story, which revealed something of Gascoigne's problem. In literary terms the book is poor: an inevitable result of its speed of completion and its concentration on banalities. Many still feel it is not bad enough and, given that Hoddle is still in the job, they may be right. Even so, his occasional candour, though not in admitting any mistakes, made for some interesting moments and plenty of headlines and some good may come from his revelations about Gascoigne.

A contrasting World Cup story, about a very different campaign, is offered by Robbie

BY GLENN MOORE

Earle and Daniel Davies. Earle provides a perceptive view from the dressing-room but the real strength of One Love is Davies' depiction of Jamaica's passage to France. This includes Fitzroy Simpson's priceless description of a nervous first night in Kingston: "I had to put a chair up against the door". "I'd been to Jamaica before but that time I went to civilisation". His Portsmouth team-mates' reaction to his and Paul Hall's involvement is also detailed: "How do you think they felt, we'd gone to Jamaica, they were fighting for survival in the middle of winter and watching Caribbean Uncovered [Sky's sex and sandily-on-the-bar-room wall programme]".

The 1990 World Cup features in Bobby Robson's autobiography, but so extensive is the former England manager's career it only rates a few pages.

His fight with cancer opens the book, giving a sense of perspective to the rest.

Another manager with a passion for the game, Harry Redknapp, is authentically captured by Derek McGovern in an unusually candid and entertaining autobiography. He also had a brush with death and proceeds to go to a cancer charity.

Harry Harris has combined with Ruud Gullit for a run through the Dutchman's career pre-Newcastle, while the similarly prolific Dave Bowler has produced a dry account of Danny Blanchflower's life and an absorbing one of Sir Alf Ramsey.

From the Netherlands comes Ajax, Barcelona, Cruyff: the ABC of an Obstinately Maestro, taken from old interviews with the enigmatic Dutchman while David Elleray's Referee!, a self-written diary of his season, has interesting elements but will confirm the prejudice of those who believe referees are rampant egotists. Not the perfect Christmas present for Gordon Strachan.



The 1970 Brazilians are given a richly evocative portrait by Garry Jenkins, who interviewed every player except for the still elusive Jairzinho

Daily Mirror

Booked: the world's best team

BY PHIL SHAW

ONE MOMENTOUS summer, a year after man first walked on the moon, a satellite beamed something even more magical into the living rooms of the world - football from a different planet.

Some of the burgeoning number of books devoted to the game's back pages glorify the humdrum; others do scant justice to greatness. The Beautiful Team (Simon & Schuster, £15.99), wherein Garry Jenkins goes in search of the 1970 Brazilians, avoids both categories. Put simply, it is a richly evocative homage to the finest team of all time.

The format adopted by Jenkins has a good track record, from Roger Kahn's classic about baseball's Brooklyn Dodgers, The Boys of Summer, to Martin Tyler's Boys of 66.

Travelling around Brazil, Jenkins interviews all the World Cup-winning class of '70 (except Jairzinho, who proves as elusive as he did to Terry Cooper in Guadalajara, and Everaldo, who is dead) about the tournament, the 4-1 final rout of Italy and how it affected their lives.

We meet Pele, one of the most famous individuals on the planet yet keenly aware of the collective nature of the triumph. Then there is Carlos Alberto, captain and scorer of the

last, definitive goal in the final, who now runs a soccer camp; Gerson, the tactician supreme, these days fighting sport's corner within his home-town council; and Felix, the eccentric keeper, who could smoke for Brazil and who now owns a garage.

Most intriguing of all is Tostao, who outniggered Bobby Moore in the build-up to Jairzinho's winner against England. Now a portly, grey-haired, semi-reclusive doctor of medicine and broadcast football columnist, he is surprisingly self-critical, which merely adds to the fascination.

One can only echo the sentiments of the midfield enforcer, Clodoaldo, who tearfully tells Jenkins: "I want to thank you for doing this. I think it is history." The author should now be commissioned to track down Brazil's 1998 finalists. They did, after all, go missing against France.

The perfect 10 in that near-perfect side, Pele, once described the penalty as "a cowardly way to score". According to Clark Miller's history of the spot-kick, He Always Put It To The Right (Victor Gollancz, £12.99), Francis Lee was unmoved by that argument.

One of many splendid stories

in a delightfully off-beat book brimming with anecdotes, analysis and trivia finds Lee playing for Manchester City in Sweden soon after converting 15 penalties in 1971-72. Waiting to take another, he was approached by the keeper, who explained his ambition to be the first to deny Lee from the 12-yard mark.

"OK," said Franny, "I'll put it to your right and I won't hit it too hard." The Swede swooped to his right. Lee crashed the ball into the opposite corner. "That," he told the disconsolate custodian, "is how

'I want to thank you for doing this. I think it is history'

you score 15 penalties without missing."

West Ham needed no such piece of psychology to lift the FA Cup in 1964 and the European Cup-Winners' Cup a year later: no, indeed, did they require any Scots, Irish or Welsh assistance.

The latter fact is the starting point for Brian Bellon's The First and Last Englishmen (Breedon Books, £16.99), which claims the Hammers as the last entirely English-born and -bred side to win either trophy (although by my reckoning, Man-

chester City did so in 1969 and 70).

The lazy way would have been to focus on the feats of Messrs Moore, Hurst and Peters. Instead the author uses the life - and recent death - of Alan Sealey, two-goal hero of the victory over Munich 1960, to plot a tale which wallows in nostalgia but avoids the Little Englander trap.

Bill Shankly is commemorated in two widely differing volumes. In Shanks For the Memory (Robson Books, £14.95), John Keith collates the wisdom and wit of Liverpool's

legendary manager, including a fascinating transcript of his 1975 local radio chat-show interview with the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. The conversation ranges from Huddersfield Town and Harold Macmillan to socialism and saunas.

The Shankly Years, by Steve Hale and Phil Thompson (Ebury Press, £14.99), is less folksy, relying mainly on Hale's unrivalled portfolio of pictures to chart what the sub-title terms "a revolution in football".

Simultaneously, one of Shankly's compatriots was presiding over a similar process in Scotland. His extraordinary era, which brought the European Cup that eluded Liverpool until Bob Paisley's reign, is examined in Jock Stein: The Celtic Years by Tom Campbell and David Potter (Mainstream Publishing, £14.99). A rounded picture includes Stein's flaws, with testimony from several of his players.

Many of the hooped heroes of '67 are profiled in A Scottish Football Hall of Fame (Mainstream, £14.99), John Cairney's affectionate assessment, interspersed with a wry line in social history of 100 great Scots from Lord Kinnaird (Old Etonians) to Ally McCoist (Old Blues).

Jeff Kent's The Potteries Derbies (Witan Books, £14.10) including p&p from 8 Nelson Crescent, Cotes Heath, via Stafford ST21 6ST) is a triumph of research, chronicling the 116-year history of hostilities between Port Vale and Stoke City in the least populous English city to support two senior clubs.

Nearby Macclesfield Town marked their inaugural League campaign with promotion on a pittance. The key moments are celebrated and off-guard backroom scenes captured in the high-quality photojournalism of Paul Atherton in Against All

Odds (More Than Ninety Minutes Publishing, Brighton, £19.99).

Breedon Books, having established their reputation with the Complete Record series, have moved successfully into oral and pictorial history at £16.99 a throw. For Wednesday Every Day of the Week, Keith Farnsworth taps memories spanning six decades of the Sheffield club's stars, staff and supporters.

Steve Gordos performs a similar task in Talking With Wolves, which sheds new light on Molineux's pioneering nights in Europe, while David Lemmon's Arsenal in the Blood relives half a century of drama on and off the pitch at Highbury through the recollections of Bob Wilson, Pat Rice, Dennis Bergkamp and others.

However, one heavyweight hardback stands out among the club-based histories. The Official Manchester United Illustrated Encyclopedia (published by the club in association with Andre Deutsch, £25), is bulging with statistical detail and pithy writing by United experts.

But what makes it exceptional is the superb design and use of graphics. It's hard to credit, but here at last is some Old Trafford merchandise that gives value for money.

WEEKEND FIXTURES AND POOLS CHECK

TODAY	
FOOTBALL	
3.0 unless stated	
FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP	
1 Chelsea v Tottenham	2 Coventry v Derby
3 Liverpool v Sheffield Wednesday	4 Manchester Utd v Middlesbrough
5 Newcastle v Leicester	6 Nottingham Forest v Blackburn
7 Southampton v Wimbledon	8 West Ham v Everton
NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE	
9 Barnsley v Swindon	10 Birmingham v Sunderland
11 Bolton v Portsmouth	12 Bradford City v Wolves
13 Crewe v Huddersfield	14 Crystal Palace v QPR
15 Grimsby v Watford	16 Norwich v Bristol City
17 Port Vale v Bury	18 Stockport v Oxford Utd
19 West Bromwich v Tranmere	
SECOND DIVISION	
20 Burnley v Northampton	21 Chesterfield v Wigan
22 Gillingham v Notts County	23 Luton v Millwall
24 Preston v Fulham	25 Reading v Oldham
26 Walsall v Stoke	27 Wrexham v Bournemouth
28 Wycombe v Lincoln City	29 York v Colchester
THIRD DIVISION	
30 Barnet v Leyton Orient	31 Cardiff v Mansfield
32 Darlington v Scunthorpe	33 Huddersfield v Exeter
34 Hartlepool v Southend	35 Hull v Swanssea
36 Peterborough v Scarbrough	37 Plymouth v Carlisle
38 Rochdale v Brighton	
SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE	
39 Celtic v Dundee	40 Dundee v Aberdeen
41 Hearts v Rangers	42 Motherwell v St Johnstone
SCOTTISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE	
43 Arbroath v East Fife	

Clyde v Queen of the South	Partick v Inverness CT
SCOTTISH THIRD DIVISION	
Brechin v Queen's Park	Cowdenbeath v East Stirling
10 Dundee v Dundee	11 Dundee v Dundee
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Premiership: Leeds manager putting predecessor's lessons to good use while stamping own mark on Elland Road

O'Leary dips into fountain of youth

BY CLIVE WHITE

HE MAY be the founding father of the Arsenal back four, a sort of Tony Adams prototype, if you like, and he may, in his own words, want to be "just like George Graham", but the Irish in David O'Leary, whether he likes it or not, has invested in him a free spirit. As a consequence, the new Leeds manager is very much his own man.

It is fair to say that few of those six or seven players under the age of 21 who will take the field at Elland Road tomorrow would have been among the visitors' selection had Graham still been in charge, particularly as it will be no place for innocents, not after the champions have been written off by their own coach, Arsène Wenger, in the wake of last Sunday's startling 3-2 defeat at Villa Park.

But O'Leary has little alternative but to keep giving youth its chance, and besides, it is what he believes in. As someone who was introduced into the Arsenal first team 23 years ago as a 17-year-old, it would be hypocritical to be otherwise. Not that his philosophy went down too well with the Leeds board when he was appointed last month. "I think some of them pood themselves when I told them what I wanted to do," he said.

It had been a constant battle with his mentor to persuade him to play the kids, the precocious Harry Kewell apart. Eighteen-year-old Jonathan Woodgate, a centre-back in his new manager's own image, was only risked in a friendly in Ireland during an early-season break on the understanding from Graham that "if it goes well, I'll take the credit, but if it goes badly I'm blaming you." As it turned out, it went well but Woodgate still did not get his chance in the League side until O'Leary took over.

"That's the great thing about being manager - you get to pick the team," he said with boyish enthusiasm. "For the two years I'd been training the youngsters I'd been telling myself 'if I ever get the chance I'm going to put them in'. They may think I'm a young idiot of a manager but I might as well succeed or fail doing it the way I want to."

O'Leary, though, was less than positive when it came to wanting the job of Leeds manager. On the contrary, he said he did not want it. "I didn't think the people here would want a No 2. I was shocked when I discovered that the fans did. I knew the players did but that worried me. I've been in dressing-rooms before where players wanted managers for the wrong reasons."

"I didn't agree with the club and the three weeks they spent piddling around with Martin O'Neill. It should have all been decided in a week. But when they eventually offered it to me, I couldn't take it just like that. I had to consider one or two things. I haven't been offered a pot of gold here. I haven't even been told how much I've got to spend. But I do know if we're going to get this club back challenging for honours we've got to buy a lot more quality players."

"The youngsters are peaking now but they'll get tired when it matters, sadly, when the final push comes for a European place," said the voice of experience. "They always do. The body at that age finally has enough and closes down. But next year they'll be stronger for it."

After the success he has had since taking over from Graham, it would seem strange to hear O'Leary say: "I wish he was still here, it would have been a pleasure working for him for the next three or four years." They may not have always seen eye-to-eye tactically or about the de-



David O'Leary, installed in the manager's seat at Elland Road, at work in his office and (below) during his playing days with Arsenal, who play host to Leeds tomorrow

Simon Wilkinson

ployment of youth but O'Leary has the utmost respect for the man who has been his boss, both as a player and as an assistant manager.

"People say I should have gone somewhere like Cambridge and learned my trade but, with all due respect to those people, I'd like to know what I would have learned down there," he said. "At Leeds I was under a fella who is the best - although I've got great admiration for Alex Ferguson. George was my mentor. I couldn't have had a better teacher. Under him I learned about discipline and about tactics and coaching, and I learned that I want to be like him, not to be a manger

Having spent five months living together in a hotel in Yorkshire, O'Leary got to know the former Arsenal manager probably better than most of his No 2s have, not that he believes it has afforded him any special privileges. "For all us being great friends, I know if he could buy some of my players he'd be flouting the law," he said. "I could be out with George having a good night but if he could stitch me up by selling me a dud he'd do it. That's what makes people like him and Ferguson winners. If anything gets in their way, too bad."

Yet O'Leary was not afraid to stand up to him, once taking an extra week's holiday after the 1990 World

"But it's taught me to be strong with players, you cannot afford to let them get away with an inch in the present financial climate. With the money players earn nowadays finding them is a waste of time. You've got to earn their respect otherwise you can end up losing your job. It only takes a couple of bad eggs to ruin a club."

If that makes O'Leary sound like a poacher-turned-gamekeeper, one should point out that he went into bat for Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink when the Dutchman asked Graham for extra time off after the World Cup finals last summer - and this time got it - and was instrumental in per-

burden in itself, without being weighed down by the deadweights around the club at the time, such as Tony Yeboah and Tomas Brolin. "It was the wrong club for him at that time," said O'Leary. "He needed to go to a better squad to improve. It reminded me of when Charlie Nicholas came down to Arsenal. He was supposed to be the icing on the cake but he was nowhere near the finished product. He should have gone to Liverpool and joined a top squad, it might have been the making of him."

"Bowyer should have been used like [Nicolas] Anelka was by Arsenal last season, putting him in, taking him out, learning his trade. But I'm starting to win the battle with Bowyer now, got him doing weights and he's building himself up. I've told him he's going to have to come and live with me if he doesn't conduct himself right and live right."

For some 20 years as a player, O'Leary was the model professional. The majority of those years were spent at Arsenal, where he seemed as much a part of the furniture as the marble halls themselves. Yet the club does not seem as deeply ingrained upon his heart as it was with the sadly disgraced Graham, who, it seemed, could not get back to that corner of north London fast enough.

"It's a different club now," O'Leary said. "I've had my day there and now I'm totally immersed in everything Yorkshire."



'Under George Graham I learned about discipline and about tactics and coaching, and I learned that I want to be like him'

who brings someone else in to coach. Like George I do the lot, I've seen Bertie Mee's administration and Don Howe's coaching and I want to be both of them together, because I think that's what George was."

"He was down in London a lot so I was left in charge. He would let me do most things - although he wouldn't let me sign anybody - but the fact that he gave me so much responsibility meant he respected me. I learned a lot and because I was coaching the players I knew exactly who I wanted in and who I wanted out."

Cup - against Graham's wishes. "He was a silly sod and he knows it. I'd played in 53 out of Arsenal's 57 games the previous season and was one of the fittest players in the club but he refused me. He told me: 'It's not my problem you've been running around Italy all summer.' When I didn't return on time he fined me two weeks' wages and banished me to the reserves for three months. I'd be on the bench and the fans would be shouting for me and I could see George thinking, 'well, he's not coming back until I say so'."

suading Lucas Radebe, whom Graham hungered after, and Nigel Martyn to sign new contracts. "If I'd left I don't think Lucas would have stayed, no matter who came in, but I had him here," he said pointing to his pocket.

He has also begun to bring out the best in arguably the most exciting but hitherto most disappointing of all his youngsters, Lee Bowyer. The expectation of being the country's most expensive teenager, when he arrived at Elland Road from Charlton two years ago for £2.6m was a

Graham's credentials test

BY THE TIME David O'Leary

returns to Highbury for the first time as a manager with his in-form Leeds team tomorrow, Arsenal's players will hope to have recaptured some of the form and fitness that carried them to fever pitch and beyond last season. But before George Graham's last two teams meet, the spotlight in the capital turns towards his present one, Tottenham, who play Chelsea at Stamford Bridge today in a fixture that should mean more than just local politics.

George Graham's Tottenham may still sound as incongruous to Londoners as Wimbledon Football Club but, to no one's great surprise, the erstwhile Arsenal autocrat is beginning to steer their great rivals away from trouble. With every game that passes, Graham's credentials take on a more lilywhite hue as the Highbury red pales.

This afternoon he is back at another of his old clubs, and although Spurs will be keen to record their first Premiership victory over Chelsea at the 13th attempt, simply avoiding defeat will represent another significant step in the rehabilitation process.

BY ADAM SZRETER

Chelsea, of course, have grander designs following the defeat of leaders Aston Villa and the impressive showing at Old Trafford. Gianluca Vialli's team has not lost in the Premiership since the opening day of the season, against Coventry, and if Gianfranco Zola's modesty would permit him he would tell you that was the only League game he has not started. Zola's form, like his haircut, is back to its very best after the distinctly dodgy spell last season that cost him his place in the World Cup, and his equalising goal on Wednesday night bore all the hallmarks of a former Footballer of the Year.

Manchester United, like Chelsea, are in the middle of a tough programme and today's visit of fifth-placed Middlesbrough is probably not what Alex Ferguson needs right now. Paul Gascoigne's suspension ensures that the mutual-admiration society of Manchester United past and present will take centre-stage with Gary Pallister, the most medalled of all United players, guaranteed a warm welcome on his return. Going back to Old Trafford

may be nothing new to Bryan Robson but taking such a formidable-looking Middlesbrough team with him certainly is, and Ferguson will be expecting no favours from a manager who is still favourite to take over from him at Old Trafford when he finally calls it a day. If Robson has a serious rival in that race it could be Brian Kidd, for whom the reality of life at the bottom should make its mark today at Nottingham Forest - if it has not already. Kidd's Blackburn and Forest are among a group of five clubs beginning to lose touch with the Premiership pack, so today would not be a good time for Blackburn to concede their first goal under their new manager, who will have Brian McClair by his side for the first time.

Whatever the outcome at the City Ground, the eyes of all concerned will be on the results from Highbury Road and the Dell, where supporters of Coventry and Southampton are already bracing themselves for a return to the relegation front-line after one season of mid-table respite. While Coventry will be optimistic about the visit of inconsistent Derby County, Dave Jones will doubt-

less be dreading the effect that Wimbledon might have on the morale of fragile Southampton. Jones and all the managers at the bottom will be clinging to the belief that, usually, at least one club in trouble half-way through the season puts on a spur after Christmas, and those in the next tier will be only too conscious that the reverse can also apply. What price Liverpool to slide all the way? Sheffield Wednesday, one defeat in eight games, should provide a reasonable gauge of the Reds' progress under Gérard Houllier at Anfield this afternoon, where the Kopites will scrutinise the attitude of their players as much as willing them to win after three defeats in a row.

Newcastle and Leicester are permanently stationed at the crossroads these days, albeit under managers who have proved themselves in the Premiership. They meet at St James' Park, where the locals are still waiting for a glimpse of the new Alan Shearer-Duncan Ferguson goal machine they were promised; and Everton visit West Ham, where David Unsworth seems sure to come in for a good-humoured, East End character assassination.

PREMIERSHIP TABLE

				Home					Away					5-game form		Upcoming matches
				Pl	Pts	GD	W	D	L	F	A	W	D			
1	Aston Villa	17	33	+10	6	2	1	17	11	3	4	1	10	6	LDDLL	Monday Charlton (A); Saturday Blackburn (A); 28 Dec Sheffield Wed (H); 9 Jan Middlesbrough (A)
2	Man Utd	17	31	+14	6	3	0	22	9	2	4	2	12	11	LWDDD	Today Middlesbrough (H); Saturday North Forest (H); 28 Dec Chelsea (A); 10 Jan West Ham (H)
3	Chelsea	17	30	+10	5	3	0	13	5	2	6	1	14	12	DDWDD	Today Tottenham (A); Saturday Southampton (A); 28 Dec Man Utd (H); 9 Jan Newcastle (A)
4	Leeds	17	29	+14	6	2	1	16	3	1	6	1	12	11	WWLWW	Tomorrow Arsenal (A); Saturday Newcastle (A); 28 Dec Man Utd (H); 9 Jan Blackburn (A)
5	Middlesbrough	17	27	+8	4	5	0	15	7	2	4	2	12	12	DWDDW	Today Man Utd (A); Saturday Liverpool (H); 28 Dec Derby (A); 9 Jan Aston Villa (H)
6	Arsenal	17	26	+7	4	4	0	11	3	2	4	3	6	7	DLDDL	Tomorrow Leeds (H); Saturday West Ham (H); 28 Dec Charlton (A); 9 Jan Liverpool (H)
7	West Ham	17	26	-2	4	3	1	12	9	3	2	4	8	12	WWWLL	Today Everton (H); Saturday Arsenal (A); 28 Dec Coventry (H); 10 Jan Man Utd (A)
8	Wimbledon	17	26	-4	5	3	1	14	9	2	2	4	8	17	LWLWW	Today Southampton (A); Saturday Charlton (H); 28 Dec Leeds (A); 9 Jan Derby (H)
9	Leicester	17	24	+2	5	2	2	14	9	1	4	3	7	10	LLDWW	Today Newcastle (A); Saturday Sheffield Wed (H); 28 Dec Blackburn (H); 9 Jan Everton (A)
10	Derby	17	23	+1	2	5	2	8	8	3	3	2	9	8	DLWDD	Today Coventry (A); Saturday Everton (A); 28 Dec Middlesbrough (H); 9 Jan Wimbledon (A)
11	Tottenham	17	23	-3	4	3	2	15	15	2	2	4	8	11	DWLWD	Today Chelsea (A); Saturday Tottenham (A); 28 Dec Everton (H); 9 Jan Sheffield Wed (A)
12	Liverpool	17	22	+5	3	3	2	15	10	3	1	5	12	12	LWLWL	Today Sheffield Wed (H); Saturday Middlesbrough (A); 28 Dec Newcastle (H); 9 Jan Arsenal (A)
13	Sheff Wed	17	22	+3	5	2	2	13	5	1	2	5	7	12	WDLWW	Today Liverpool (A); Saturday Leicester (H); 28 Dec Southampton (H); 9 Jan Man Utd (A)
14	Everton	17	22	-4	2	5	2	3	5	3	2	3	8	10	LWLWDW	Today West Ham (A); Saturday Derby (H); 28 Dec Tottenham (A); 9 Jan Leicester (H)
15	Newcastle	17	21	-0	4	2	2	13	10	1	4	4	8	11	DLWDD	Today Leicester (A); Saturday Leeds (H); 28 Dec Liverpool (A); 9 Jan Chelsea (H)
16	Charlton	17	16	-5	2	3	2	13	8	1	4	5	9	19	DLLLL	Monday Aston Villa (A); Saturday Wimbledon (A); 28 Dec Arsenal (H); 9 Jan Southampton (A)
17	Coventry	17	15	-11	3	2	3	9	10	1	1	7	5	15	WLDDL	Today Derby (H); Saturday Tottenham (H); 28 Dec West Ham (A); 9 Jan North Forest (H)
18	Blackburn	17	13	-9	3	2	4	10	10	0	2	6	5	14	LLLWD	Today North Forest (A); Saturday Aston Villa (H); 28 Dec Leicester (A); 9 Jan Leeds (H)
19	North Forest	17	11	-15	1	4	3	6	9	1	1	7	9	21	DLDDL	Today Blackburn (H); Saturday Man Utd (A); 28 Dec Southampton (H); 9 Jan Coventry (A)
20	Southampton	17	10	-22	1	2	5	9	17	1	2	6	3	17	LWLLL	Today Wimbledon (H); Saturday Chelsea (H); 28 Dec North Forest (A); 9 Jan Charlton (H)

Weekend guide to the Premiership

MATCH OF THE WEEKEND

Chelsea v Tottenham

Last season: 2-1

IN A POSSIBLE case of reverse psychology, the Tottenham Hotspur manager, George Graham, was tipping Chelsea to win the League yesterday.

"I believe it could be their year because Chelsea have the depth and strength in their squad to keep them right up there with the Manchester Uniteds and the Arsenal," Graham said. "And the difference with them this season is that they are much more consistent, picking up points from games which last season they would have lost."

And though he fears for the future of home-grown players amid the mass importation of overseas talent, he said he would happily adopt Gianluca Vialli's foreign policy if it meant turning Tottenham into title contenders.

By CHRIS MAUME

"The possible long-term effects on young English players trying to break through are obvious but, as a manager, you can only do one thing at a time," he said.

"And the first is to make sure your club is successful. Chelsea have got it right now. I'd love to do the same at Tottenham with all British players but if it means getting the quality I want then I wouldn't hesitate to buy abroad. Don't be surprised if we make some signings before long. Some people are saying that because we've done well in terms of recent results that I won't get the cheque-book out but that's not true."

Dennis Wise misses out for Chelsea as he

begins his latest suspension, but the Blues are able to welcome back centre-backs Marcel Desailly and Franck Leboeuf. Desailly has recovered from the knee injury which kept him out of the midweek draw at Manchester United, while Leboeuf is available again after missing that game due to a one-match ban.

Full-back Graeme Le Saux is also expected to be fit after being taken off with a knock at Old Trafford on Wednesday, while midfielder Roberto Di Matteo could play against Spurs with a brace protecting his injured hand.

Justin Edinburgh returns to the Tottenham squad three weeks after a knee operation as Graham's squad chase their first Premiership away win under his manage-

ment. Full-back Edinburgh, who had surgery to remove some flaking bone inside the knee, could replace winger Andy Sinton who has been debilitated in defence in the last four games but collected a shin injury against Manchester United last Saturday.

Centre-backs John Scales and Ramon Vega are still missing through injuries and 19-year-old Luke Young looks set to play his fifth senior game in a row.

CHELSEA (from): De Gea, McCook, Kharine, Leboeuf, Babayaro, Desailly, Le Saux, Ferret, Myers, Duberry, Lambourde, Terry, Pires, Di Matteo, Poyet, Goldbach, Nichols, Morris, Vialli, Zola, Flo.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (from): Walker, Carr, Calderwood, Young, Campbell, Edinburgh, Sinton, Wilson, Fox, Nielsen, Anderson, Gnani, Ferdinand, Armstrong, Allen, Clemence, Dominguez, Bardsley (2).
Suspensions: Chelsea: Wise
Referee: G. Poll.

Coventry v Derby County

Last season: 1-0

COVENTRY'S NEW £650,000 signing from Portsmouth, John Aloisi, is expected to be among the substitutes for today's game against Derby at Highfield Road. Aloisi completed his move to the Sky Blues on Thursday, but despite his new side's urgent need for a goalscorer, it looks as though he will have to wait for his first start. Darren Huckerby returns from suspension to play alongside Noel Whelan up front, while Paul Telfer is also back after a one-match ban.

Derby are hoping that their Italian midfielder Stefano Erano will win his race to be fit for the match. The former Milan player has been a victim of the flu bug currently sweeping the country, but he is expected to start providing he has recovered in time. County's German defender, Stefan Schnoor, is looking doubtful with an ankle injury, but there is some good news for the Rams manager, Jim Smith, as his midfielder Lee Carsley is available again after serving a one-match suspension. The captain, Igor Stimac, is still in Croatia, in an effort to speed up his recovery from an ankle problem.

COVENTRY CITY (from): Hedman, Nilsson, Shaw, Williams, Edworthy, Telfer, McAllister, Boring, Froggatt, Huckerby, Whelan, Aloisi, Jackson, Green, Burrows, Dashi, Solovet, Sinton, Optichuk.
DERBY COUNTY (from): Poom, Prior, Carbrant, Larsen, Delap, Bohinen, Erano, Powell, Olorogun, Balogun, Vranjic, Scurridge, Hout, Carsley, Harper, Elliott, Schnoor.
Suspensions: None.
Referee: U. Rennie.

Liverpool v Sheffield Wed

Last season: 2-1

LIVERPOOL WILL be looking for only their third home win in the Premiership since early September when they face Sheffield Wednesday this afternoon. Since beating Coventry at Anfield on 9 September, they have won only four of 11 home games in all competitions, leaving them with their worst overall record for 44 years. Manager Gerard Houllier has the long-term injury problems of Steve McManaman, Oyvind Leonhardsen, Sean Dundee and Rob Jones to contend with and is unlikely to have many alternatives to the side that lost 1-0 at Wimbledon last Sunday.

Attempts to sign the veteran German defender Thomas Helmer have broken down due to contractual problems, and Houllier is still considering a move for Cameroon defender Rigobert Song, who has been training at the club this week.

Sheffield Wednesday manager Danny Wilson looks set to name an unchanged line-up as his side seek their third straight win. Wilson has no fresh injury worries following the Owls' victory at home to Charlton last week, so the same starting XI are likely to keep their places for the sixth consecutive game. **LIVERPOOL** (from): James, Carragher, Babo, Staunton, Heggen, Ince, Redknapp, Berger, Djorkare, Owen, Fowler, Rieley, Harkness, McGeer, Frieel, Avramie, Gerrard, Martinez.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (from): Smicki, Ashworth, Jock, Walker, Carbone, Booth, Bennett, Coburn, Humphreys, Briscoe, Oakes, Hinchcliffe, Sedoski, Emerson, Mulron, Ruff, Alexanderson, Sommer.
Suspensions: None.
Referee: A. Wilkie.

Manchester Utd v Middlebrough

Last season: No fixture

DWIGHT YORKE looks certain to miss the visit of Middlebrough to Old Trafford after aggravating a groin strain during Wednesday's draw with Chelsea. United's leading scorer - the Trinidadian has scored seven goals in the Premiership and 12 overall - sat out last Saturday's game at Tottenham, made the starting line-up in midweek only for the problem to flare up again. He will have intensive treatment up to kick-off but Ferguson is not ready to risk him with the busy Christmas programme coming up.

The United manager has a striking dilemma up front, with Ole Gunnar Solskjaer also having treatment on an ankle injury after being left out of the squad on Wednesday. Ferguson could be forced into using last season's strike force of Teddy Sheringham and Andy Cole.

Middlebrough, for whom Gary Pallister makes what is likely to be an emotional return to Old Trafford, are waiting for fitness tests on Gianluca Festa, Curtis Fleming, Phil Stamp, Mark Summerbell and Brian Deane.

MANCHESTER UNITED (from): Schwarzer, Roberts, Fleming, Gordon, Stockdale, Paterson, Cooper, Vickers, Festa, Mouton, Townsend, Summerbell, Richard, Deane, Beck, Blackmore, Kinder, Harrison.
Suspensions: None.
Referee: N. Barry.

Newcastle v Leicester

Last season: 3-3

AFTER A four goalless draw at Blackburn Rovers last week, Newcastle United manager Rudd Gullit has to wait to discover if he can field his new-look 23m strike force for the first time, against Leicester City this afternoon. England captain Alan Shearer will undergo a late fitness test on the hamstring injury that has kept him out of the last four games, while a last-minute decision will be taken on his partner Duncan Ferguson, who has missed training all week with flu. Club captain Rob Lee is back from suspension and goalkeeper Shay Given appears to have recovered from a shoulder problem.

Tony Cottee could be in line for a surprise return for Leicester, who have won only once in their last 17 visits to St James' Park, but who moved into the top half of the table with their victory over Nottingham Forest last Saturday. The veteran striker has been out for four weeks with a thigh strain but is in contention for a place today. Steve Walsh is doubtful with the flu, but Frank Sinclair returns from suspension. Matt Elliott could return to central defence.

NEWCASTLE UNITED (from): Harper, Given, Charvet, Barron, Howey, Hughes, Doherty, Lee, Speed, Glass, Solari, Hamann, Shearer, Ferguson, Anderson, Kerr, Johnsen, P. Neville, Greening, Van der Gouw.
LEICESTER CITY (from): Keller, Arphexad, Guppy, Walsh, Taggart, Sinclair, Elliott, Upton, Lennon, Parker, Izet, Zagorakis, Kadambari, Impy, Savage, Heskey, Cottee, Wilson, Fenton.
Suspensions: None.
Referee: J. Winter.

And statistics Why football's bench mark is changing

It's over 30 years since Keith Peacock became the first Football League substitute for Charlton against Bolton on 21 August 1966. Since then the business of substitutes has grown beyond expectation and so far this season only 20 starting line-ups have completed games intact. On 107 occasions all three substitutes have been used by the end of the 90 minutes.

Number of substitutes used	1998-99 Premiership games played
0	20
1	74
2	138
3	107

Super-subs - the top flight's most used

Player	Games
Steve Jones (Charlton)	15
James Beattie (Southampton)	10
Danny Cadamarteri (Everton)	10
Tor Andre Flo (Chelsea)	9
Dougie Freedman (Nottingham Forest)	9
Phil Stamp (Middlesbrough)	8
Stuart Wilson (Leicester)	8

... and those who are replaced most often

Player	Games
Gianfranco Zola (Chelsea)	10
Theo Zagorakis (Leicester)	9
Eyal Berkovic (West Ham)	8
Pierluigi Casiraghi (Chelsea)	7
Jean Claude Darcheville (Nottingham Forest)	7
Paul Gascoigne (Middlesbrough)	7
Marcus Gayle (Wimbledon)	7
Carl Leaburn (Wimbledon)	7
Hamilton Ricard (Middlesbrough)	7
Clyde Wijnhard (Leeds)	7

As much as foreign players have been welcomed into Premiership football they are often the players called out of the action early.

The goalkeeping Cinderellas

Five men who have spent all season on the bench with no chance to get to the ball

Matthew Clarke (Sheffield Wednesday)
Mark Crossley (Nottingham Forest)
Paul Heald (Wimbledon)
Kevin Hitchcock (Chelsea)
Steve Ogilvie (Coventry)

NB: Pegguy Arphexad did get to the ball when he was a 61st minute substitute for Kasey Keller in Leicester's first match of the season but has been firmly on the bench for the 16 games since then.

Bench-sore

With nominated Premiership sides up to 16 people, more and more players have to wait patiently on their teams' benches. Some spend more time there than others.

Premiership clubs' players in waiting (outfielders)
Players at each club that have spent most matches on the bench inactive (appearances in other games)

11 Games	Leeds' David Wetherall (6)
	Leicester's Gary Parker (5)
10 Games	Aston Villa's Simon Grayson (7)
	Liverpool's Bjorn Tor Kvarme (2)
9 Games	Wimbledon's Mark Kennedy (7)
8 Games	Blackburn's Gary Croft (4)
	Coventry's Trond Egil Solvold (9)
7 Games	Middlesbrough's Clayton Blackmore (9)
	Arsenal's Gilles Grimandi (3)
	Charlton's Steve Brown (6)
	Man Utd's Henning Berg (7)
	Nottm Forest's Christian Edwards (1)
6 Games	Newcastle's Warren Barton (10)
	Sheff Wed's Jim Magilton (6)
	West Ham's Marc Kellier (10)
	West Ham's Samassi Abou (2)
5 Games	Chelsea's Bernard Lambourde (6)
	Chelsea's Eddie Newton (1)
	Derby's Steve Elliott (6)
	Everton's Gareth Farrelly (1)
	Tottenham's Stephen Clemence (11)
4 Games	Southampton's Richard Dryden (4)

Statistics: Brian Sears/Nick Harris



There have been 34 goals by subs this season, or one goal every 12 substitutions.

Best substitute net returns	Goals scored by subs
Middlesbrough	4
Chelsea	3
Leeds	3
Man Utd	3
Newcastle	3
Tottenham	3

... and the super duper subs in the making

Players who have scored as a sub more than once

3 goals as a sub	Tor Andre Flo (Chelsea)
2 goals as a sub	Jordi Cruyff (Man Utd)
	Alan Smith (Leeds)
	Steffen Iversen (Tottenham)
	Efan Ekoku (Wimbledon)

TOMORROW'S GAME (4.0)

Arsenal v Leeds

Last season: 2-1

ARSENAL'S ENGLAND goalkeeper David Seaman is almost certain to miss tomorrow's Premiership visit of Leeds United to Highbury after damaging a shoulder ligament in training.

The news is a blow for the Premiership champions, whose manager, Arsene Wenger, was confident their injury crisis had eased considerably with the return of French midfielder Emmanuel Petit and Patrick Vieira. Both are fit to face Leeds after their crucial partnership was broken a month ago, when Vieira sustained a hamstring injury against Wimbledon and Petit suffered a torn stomach muscle.

Vieira made his comeback against Aston Villa last Sunday and now Petit returns as well after missing five games.

The Austrian Under-21 international Alex Manninger stands by to replace Seaman in only his third game this season. But Tony Adams (back), Ray Parlour (knee), Nigel Winterburn (hamstring) and Stephen Hughes (hip) are still out, so the Argentinian defender Nelson Vivas is set to continue at left back.

Leeds have injury worries of their own, with their captain, Lucas Radebe, and new signing David Baty both rated "very doubtful" for tomorrow's match.

Radebe twisted his right knee in the 2-0 home win over Coventry on Monday, only his second game back following a five-week lay-off after damaging ligaments in the same knee, while Baty, on his second debut for Leeds, sustained bruised ribs in the same match. Alfie Haaland, who is available again after suspension, stands by to deputise.

ARSENAL (from): Manninger, Dixon, Keown, Bould, Vivas, Lundberg, Petit, Vieira, Chennars, Bergkamp, Anelka, Wreh, Upton, Grmendi, Bos Morris, Taylor.
LEEDS UNITED (from): Manninger, Haaland, Radebe, Wernersall, Wijnhard, Hazelbaink, Ribeiro, Bowyer, Hopkin, Granville, Halls, Kewell, Harte, Barry, Woodgate, McNair, McPhail, Smith, Robinson.
Suspensions: None.
Referee: P. O'Rourke.

Nottingham Forest v Blackburn

Last season: No fixture

THE NOTTINGHAM Forest manager, Dave Bassett, is poised to spring a defensive surprise for the visit of fellow strugglers Blackburn. Bassett is toying with the idea of deploying a central defender, Jon Olav Hjelde, at right-back as he is keen to revert to a 4-4-2 formation, but has been unhappy with the performances of Thierry Bonalain in that position. And with transfer-listed Des Lyttle on loan at Port Vale, he is set to turn to Hjelde - even though he has never played at full-back for Forest. Meanwhile, the forward Dougie Freedman is expected to return to the front line at the expense of Marlon Harewood.

Rovers, seeking to sustain their encouraging start under new manager Brian Kidd, include their £2.35m signing Keith Gillespie in the squad travelling to the City Ground, and could also have Chris Sutton returning to action after a six-week lay-off through suspension and injury. Kevin Gallacher will again be missing, however. Centre-back Darren Peacock is available again after recovering from a broken toe and goalkeeper John Folan, who has been suffering from concussion, faces a late fitness test.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST (from): Beasant, Hjelde, Bonalain, Rogers, Chettle, Mattsson, Armstrong, Gemmell, Stone, Johnson, Quashie, Bert Williams, Van Hoek, Freedman, Harewood, Shipperley, Gray, Darvill, Crossley.
BLACKBURN ROVERS (from): Ferris, Kemp, Hencho, Dally, Davidson, Johnson, Sherwood, McNally, Wilkie, Davies, Blake, Ouf, Brookes, Marcolin, Croft, Williams, Gillespie, Peacock, Folan, Sutton.
Suspensions: None.
Referee: S. Lodge.

Southampton v Wimbledon

Last season: 0-1

CENTRAL DEFENDER Ken Monkou is expected to return to Southampton's starting line-up after missing the last three matches with a thigh injury. The Dutchman could return in place of Gary Monk as Saints attempt to end a run of three successive defeats without a goal. Norwegian striker Egil Olsenstad will play in attack. Charlton Palmer returns from a one-match suspension, but manager David Jones is still hampered by injuries to long-term casualties David Hirst, John Beresford and Francis Benali.

Wimbledon winger Gareth Ainsworth has joined Michael Hughes on the treatment table for a groin injury and misses the trip. However, although Ainsworth is out for at least a week, he has hopes of being back in action on Boxing Day.

Nigerian international Efan Ekoku is expected to remain a substitute after his stay on the bench in the win over Liverpool last Sunday. The transfer-listed striker is anxious to leave the Dons and is reportedly angry that offers from other Premiership clubs have been turned down by manager Joe Kinneir.

SOUTHAMPTON (from): Jones, Hiley, Monkou, Lundkvam, Dodd, Palmer, Hughes, Oakes, Bridge, Le Tissier, Olsenstad, Kachoul, Monk, Basham, Beattie, Williams, Williams, Greening.
WIMBLEDON (from): Sullivan, Cunningham, Kimble, Perry, Blackwell, Thatcher, C. Hughes, Egan, Ekoku, Roberts, Gayle, Ardley, Heald, Leaburn, M. Hughes, Kennedy, Cardstone, Ewell, Jupp, Clarke, Carr, Fear.
Suspensions: Wimbledon: Ewell.
Referee: M. Reed.

West Ham v Everton

Last season: 2-2

EVERTON WILL have three West Ham old boys in their line-up at Upton Park, but not all of them are likely to be expecting a warm festive welcome. The injury-hit Merseysiders have Steven Bille, Don Hutchison and David Unsworth all returning to the East End, and while Unsworth and Hutchison can expect a good response from the Upton Park faithful, Bille knows he is in for an afternoon of abuse after implying that the Hammers were unambitious before joining Everton. Danny Cadamarteri's return from suspension is the only bright spot for Everton's manager, Walter Smith. His squad is badly weakened by injuries to Craig Short and Dave Watson, while Ibrahim Bakayoko, John Oster and Gareth Farrelly all have flu. Michael Ball also has been hit by the virus sweeping the club, but is suspended in any case.

For West Ham, centre-back Neil Ruddock begins a three-match ban while John Moncur is also suspended. Paul Kitson is still out with a toe problem but should be fit for the Christmas programme. Eyal Berkovic and Javier Margas both return to the squad after injury.

WEST HAM (from): Hulse, Pearce, Ferdinand, Potts, Margas, Lomas, Lampard, Lazaridis, Kellie, Sinclair, Berkovic, Harrison, Wright, Foster, Onyiah, Ednering, Breacher, Coyne, Boylan.
EVERTON (from): Whyte, Garland, Bille, Matarazzo, Unsworth, Collins, Hutchison, Grant, Dacour, Barry, McKee, Cadamarteri, Ward, Branch, Smother, Jeffers, McDermott, Regan, Farley.
Suspensions: West Ham: Ruddock, Moncur. Everton: Ball, Dunne.
Referee: R. Harris.

MONDAY NIGHT'S GAME (8.0)

Charlton v Aston Villa

Last season: No fixture

TWO SIDES that have tasted life at the top of the Premiership this season meet at The Valley on Monday having experienced contrasting recent pasts. Charlton, surprise League leaders in August, albeit briefly, have won just one of their last eight League games. Manager Alan Curbishley kept his players in the dressing room for more than an hour and a half after last week's 3-0 defeat at Sheffield Wednesday and Addicks supporters can only hope that whatever he said will do some good today. Their task will not be an easy one, however, as Monday's visitors are Aston Villa, not only the current Premiership leaders but also a side hitting a rich vein of form against some of the division's toughest opponents.

Last Sunday's 3-2 home win over Double-winners Arsenal followed a draw with Manchester United, but was all the more impressive given that Villa were 2-0 down at half time. The retrieval showed that John Gregory's men not only have the kind of fair demonstrated by Dion Dublin's nine goals in seven games for his new club, but also the kind of fighting spirit needed to wage a successful title campaign. Charlton are not an easy side to beat at home but they will not be relishing this fixture.

SPORT

O'LEARY'S YOUNG ONES P30 • BREWER TOAST OF THE TOWN P23

FA defends overseas help

Gregory resigns as Pompey chairman

BY NICK DUXBURY

MARTIN GREGORY, the man who instigated a cut-price sale of the entire playing squad at Portsmouth to tackle debts which have soared to £5m, yesterday quit the First Division club.

The 45-year-old Gregory has been the target of a campaign by Portsmouth fans attempting to force him to sell his shareholding.

"I'm not in a position now to say exactly what will happen to the club in the future," said Gregory after resigning as chairman and director. "A further announcement will be made on Monday." Pompey, seventh from bottom, visit Bolton today.

Two weeks ago, Gregory announced a bargain basement sale of his players. Coventry City were among several clubs quick to take advantage, snapping up the striker John Aloisi, who had scored 17 goals for Pompey this season, for £550,000. The Premiership club would have expected to pay double that amount under normal circumstances.

In a match televised nationwide last Sunday, Portsmouth fans invaded the Fratton Park pitch at half-time and full-time to call for Gregory's resignation.

Gregory took over as managing director of the club five years ago after his late father, Jim, fell ill. He became chairman in January this year when he resumed command at the Fratton Park following the brief reign of Terry Venables, the former England manager.

Last week, Gregory removed responsibility for player transfers from manager Alan Ball and appointed the showbusiness agent Athol S. to oversee the buying and selling of players.

"We want to know who will be running the club now that Mr Gregory has gone," Keith Waldon, Portsmouth's assistant manager, said.

"I can understand why he has done it and in some respects as the chairman he has brought some things on himself. I don't know who is going to run the club and we must have some direction in these troubled times."

FOOTBALL

BY NICK HARRIS

ing one of the best coaches around to help us."

Thailand is represented on the executive committee of Fifa, world football's governing body, by Makudi Worawi, who holds one of the crucial 24 votes. With himself speaking at the Asian Games, where he is preparing the Thai side for today's bronze medal play-off match against China, said: "It's nothing to do with me. I'm a soccer coach. That's what I am. I'm here to do a job, I'm not interested in the politics."

An FA spokesman said: "The FA has had these coaching ini-

tatives, in dozens of countries, for years." He added that such help was not dependent on whether a country can help the English FA in some way. The 2006 campaign director, Alec McGivan, who is currently on bid business in Thailand, conceded, however, that "there has become an increased awareness of the needs of others" since the 2006 campaign started.

The Independent revealed yesterday that the English campaign team had visited both Mali in West Africa and Trinidad - both represented on the 24-man Fifa committee - on the lobbying trail and either given or promised to give extensive assistance to both countries' FAs.

Ismail Bhamjee, of Botswana, who also has a vote, added yesterday that the English FA had given two refereeing workshops in his country in the last eight months and were looking at the possibility of persuading British companies to help build his association a new headquarters.

Earlier this year Glenn Hoddle revealed in his World Cup diary that England's friendly in May against Saudi Arabia was arranged because McGivan was "keen on the Saudis as opponents". Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Al-Dahal is on Fifa's executive committee.

McGivan said yesterday: "We are asking people to vote for us. What is more natural

than for them to say 'Is there any way you can help us. That's the real world.'"

Wolfgang Niersbach, a spokesman for the German football federation, which is also preparing a 2006 bid, said he was surprised at the extent of England's 2006 campaign.

"Our surprise started the day after Euro 96 finished and the English said they would be making a bid for 2006," he said, adding the German campaign team would attend major international football exhibitions for lobbying purposes but not target individual voters or offer special assistance to nations with Fifa executives.

The English bid was "professional", said Niersbach, but

added it should never have come about because it had been agreed in the past that if England staged Euro 96, Germany would have English support for 2006.

"The key point above all is the gentleman's agreement between [ex-FA chairman] Bert Millichip and our president, who did so much work for Euro 96."

Meanwhile, Keith Wiseman, the FA chairman, yesterday defended the proposed gifts of £3.2m to the Football Association of Wales that led to the resignation of his chief executive Graham Kelly on Tuesday.

"Bribery is basically where somebody is in the Bahamas with the money," Wiseman said, denying the proposed gifts had been agreed only on the condi-

tion that the FAW backed his attempt to become a Fifa vice-president. He added that the FAW had been "prepared to ask their council to support England for that [the Fifa job] if we were able to consider offering them some help in their development programme. We're talking about a development programme for Welsh schoolchildren."

Kelly resigned after a meeting of the FA executive committee, which also passed a unanimous vote of no-confidence in Wiseman, who said yesterday he saw no reason to resign and would fight his case. "I am simply exercising what I think is a perfectly proper and sensible right to have the matter taken back to the [FA] council."



Timmy Murphy takes to his heels after being thrown by Majestic Storm in the Mac Vidi Novices' Chase at Lingfield yesterday

Racing, pages 24-25; Photograph: Julian Herbert/Allsport

Wales plumb the depths of farce and chaos

IF ENGLISH rugby politics is generally a humour-free zone, the committee-room wrangling on the far side of the Severn Bridge has plumbed such unfathomable depths that the only sound to be heard is that of laughter in the darkness. Gareth Davies, the Cardiff chief executive, came out with a classic one-liner yesterday

RUGBY UNION

BY CHRIS HEWETT

when, during a colourful description of Thursday night's disciplinary hearing with the Welsh Rugby Union at which his club was fined £150,000, he said: "I've been in some kangaroo courts in my time, but the only

thing missing from this one was Rolf Harris."

As a pity summary of the state of the domestic game in Wales, it could hardly have been bettered. By slapping identical arbitrary fines on both Cardiff and Swansea - the other top side currently engaged in a programme of unsanctioned rebel fixtures against the lead-

ing English Premiership clubs - the WRU has revealed the inherent weakness of its own position. The union would far rather have expelled its two rufesniks, but knew it would be playing into their hands to do so. If Cardiff and Swansea suddenly found themselves free agents, they would throw an immediate party.

The chances of either club actually paying the fine are about as remote as their deciding to sign up the WRU's loyalty agreement, the imposition of which led to their breakaway in the first place. "I can only think that the union decided on the fines in an effort to escape censure from the International Board, which wants to see us punished for playing these games against the English," said Davies. "It's no coincidence that we were fined less than 24 hours before the WRU was scheduled to go before the board's disciplinary panel."

These latest developments leave the game in Wales in a state of advanced chaos. On the one hand, the union wants to create four so-called "super clubs" as a means of raising playing standards; on the other, it has just punished the two clubs with the strongest claims to "super" status. Indeed, Cardiff were said last night to be reconsidering their formal bid for one of the four franchises on offer.

Eveo more shamefacedly, it was still not clear yesterday whether Cardiff remained in this season's Swalec Cup, even though they were scheduled to play Llandovery this afternoon. Cardiff insisted building work on the new Millennium Stadium had rendered their own Arms Park venue unplayable and offered Llandovery a series of mid-week dates. Their opponents, meanwhile, said the several farmworkers amongst their squad could play only at a week-end and offered to stage the

match at their own ground - an offer Cardiff abruptly rejected.

Meanwhile, the English clubs could not resist having their say on matters Welsh. "We believe that the aggressive action of the WRU in fining Cardiff and Swansea is extremely unnecessary and particularly unhelpful at a time when talks are being held to resolve rugby in the northern hemisphere for the ultimate benefit of all," said Howard Thomas, the acting chief executive of English First Division Rugby.

Bristol, the Premiership Two title challengers, have suspended David Knox, their Australian outside-half, for 30 days and fined him £5,000 following his dismissal in last Sunday's important match at Worcester. Knox, a former Wallaby stand-off who started his Test career in 1985 and completed it only a year ago, was sent off for dissent after just 20 minutes of a game his side went on to lose 20-9.

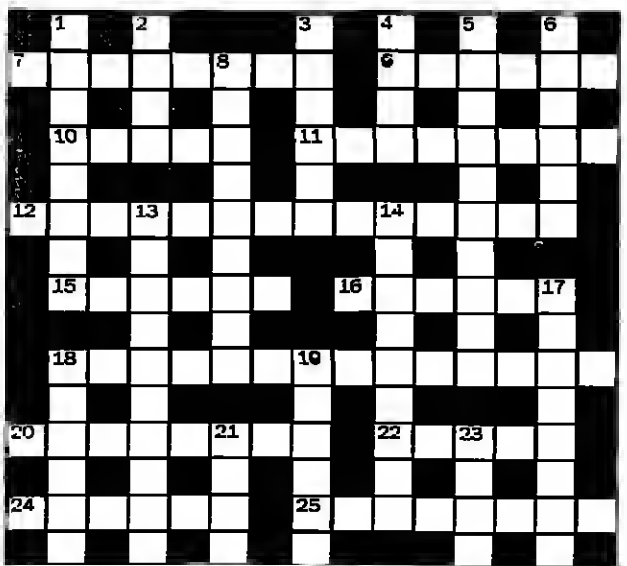
His club bawled from December 13 to January 12 inclusive, while the £5,000 will be donated to the charity SPIRE, which supports rugby players who have suffered serious neck injuries.

Knox appeared before a club disciplinary panel earlier this week, which was then adjourned while he sought legal advice. He is among several overseas signings made by Dwyer this season in a bid to ensure that Bristol regain Premiership One status at the first attempt.

THE SATURDAY CROSSWORD

No. 3798 Saturday 19 December

By Phi



ACROSS

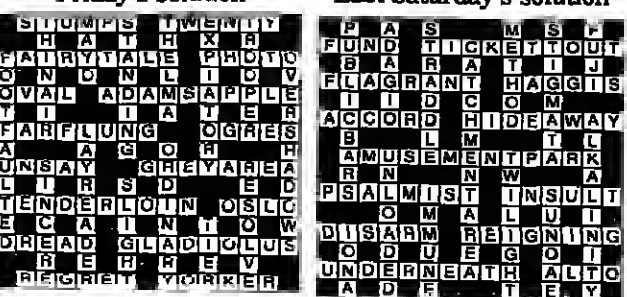
- 7 Test for roadworthiness before drivers' organisation rejected vehicle (5-3)
- 9 Man runs after taking in hard composer (6)
- 10 Dance? Curious dance, half unfinished (5)
- 11 Run gala badly run in a particular form (6)
- 12 Arrange reinstatement, engaging Henry as ordinary worker (13,3,6)
- 15 Particular dock? (6)
- 16 Spirit or passion possessing one (6)
- 18 No practice isn't out of place for me! (7)
- 20 Promoting health - for example, encompassing turning plague-carrier in (8)
- 22 German writer embraced by duchesses (5)
- 24 Lose sight after 'cutting' fairy creature (6)
- 25 One quivers in fear (though is not above cheeky ripostes) (8)

DOWN

- 1 Chap tucking into pumpkin? One relishes food (8)
- 2 Many people receiving nothing will be upset in a prosperous period (4)
- 3 A capital price leading to complaint? (6)
- 4 Some of them may seem to be female (4)
- 5 Timeless archaic tune possibly associated with an ancient writer (10)
- 6 Fussy shut about about American lawyer (6)
- 8 Actors and what one of them might say about love - it gives an edge to things! (9)
- 13 Not coquette, enabling it to be demolished (10)
- 14 Polluted quantity of water I got rid of (9)
- 17 Panic and rioting this year (8)
- 18 What artist may use in study involving light (6)
- 19 Test score not allowed (3)
- 21 Relative to visit as a ghost, headless (4)
- 23 Second boat for the island (4)

Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution



The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive handbaked copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: C. Ellis, Newport; S. Fountain, Southall; L. Radford, Bournemouth; H. Walker, SW1; C. Green, Old Sodbury.

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THE INDEPENDENT
19 December 1998

THE INDEPENDENT

19 December 1998

WEEKEND REVIEW

COMMENT • ARTS & BOOKS • COUNTRY & GARDEN • TRAVEL

THE WORLD'S
PEACEMAKER:
KOFI ANNAN

PROFILE, PAGE 5

GUIDING STAR:
THE SCIENCE
OF CHRISTMAS

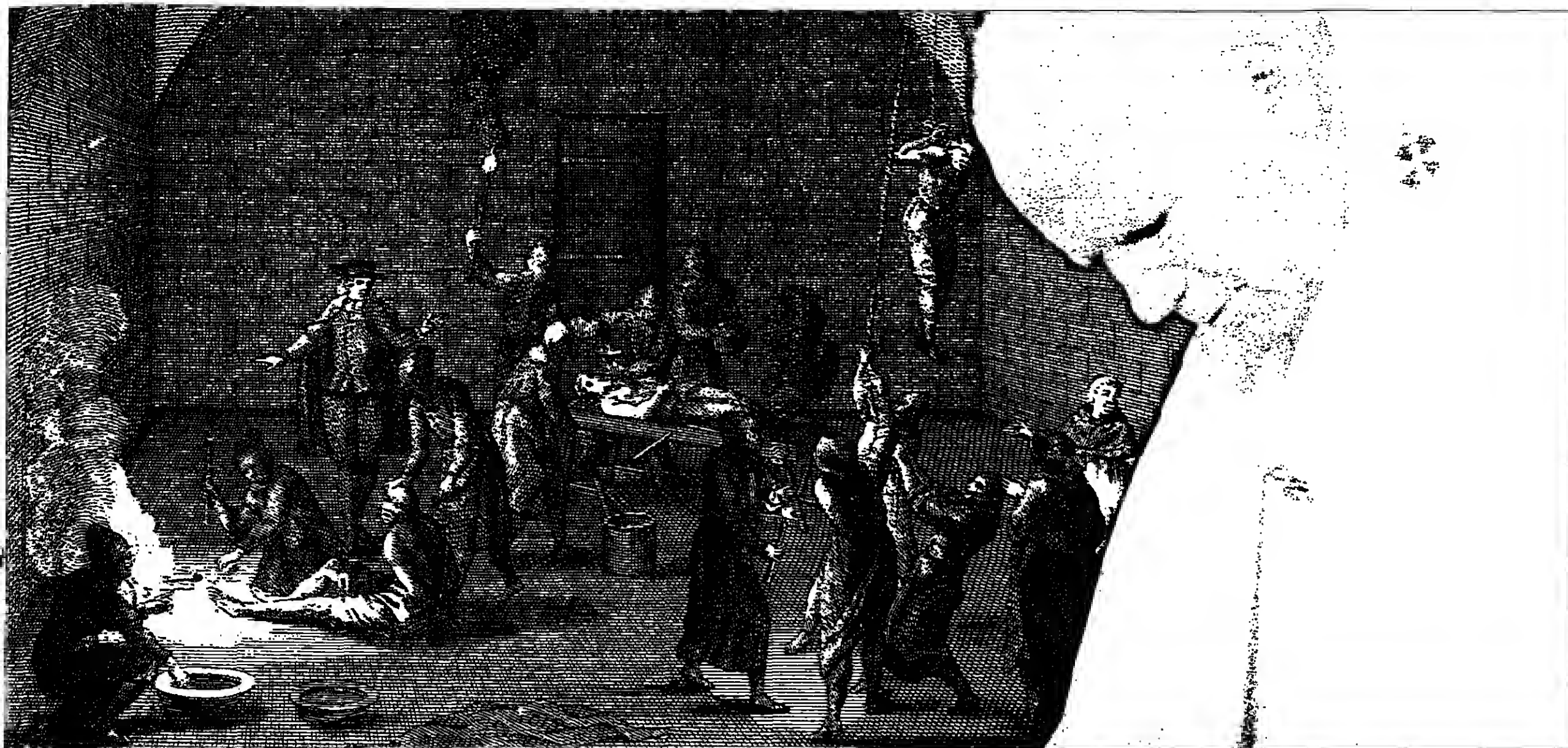
ESSAY, PAGE 7

JUST WHAT IS
IT ABOUT
MISTLETOE?

COUNTRY, PAGE 17

WHY THE
BRITS LOVE
VAL D'ISERE

TRAVEL, PAGE 21



A sorry business

With his unprecedented apology in 1992 for the silencing of Galileo, Pope John Paul II began his noble project of making amends for the Church's mistakes. But can he really say sorry for the Inquisition's centuries of terror and torture?

Only in a don's study in Cambridge would you be given your tea in a mug commemorating a scholastic philosopher. It was emblazoned with the Latin tag *frustra fit per plura quod potest fieri per pauciora*. In philosophy this saw goes by the name of Occam's razor, after William of Occam. Loosely translated it means: "Don't look for complicated explanations when a simple one will do."

I decided to apply it to the question to hand, which was: why are so many apologies flooding out of the Vatican at present? The academic to whom my query was addressed, Dr Eamon Duffy, reader in church history and fellow of Magdalen College, should know. He has just returned from Rome where he was part of a private team of eminent historians called in to advise on the latest papal attempt to make amends.

It all began in 1992 when Pope John Paul II finally admitted the Church had been wrong 349 years earlier to silence Galileo for saying that the Earth moved round the Sun. Next he apologised for the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, when more than 5,000 Protestants were murdered in 16th-century France. Then came contrition for the Church's role in persecuting the Jews - from the Dark Ages to the Holocaust. His International Theological Commission has completed the first draft of a 35-page apology for the Crusades. A commission has been set up to consider whether pardons should be granted to people burnt at the stake as witches in Bohemia in the 17th century. And now Dr Duffy and 40 others have begun laying the groundwork for an apology for the entire Inquisition.

This will be the big one. After all, the Church can claim that its culpability in the Holocaust was limited to acts of omission. But with the Inquisition it was, as the Pope has put it, "the sons and daughters of the Church" who turned the thumbscrews and lit the pyres.

The very term has become a byword for despotic terror and narrow cruelty - images, in the words of the poet Tennyson, of "Inquisition dogs and devildom of Spain". After the Enlightenment the words became a shorthand for what secular liberalism hated in the church -

its constraint on freedom, its intellectual tyranny, its obscurantism and (in its condemnation of Galileo) its hostility to science.

Such are the verdicts of poetry and politics, but what does history say? The recent gathering of the historians of the Inquisition came some 10 months after the Vatican had opened its archives on the subject for the first time. More than 4,000 volumes had remained secret, some of them for 700 years. Eamon Duffy was one of a small team allowed to tour the 27 rooms of dusty wooden shelves, on which the crumbling, vellum-bound volumes are stacked.

"It was rather weird to pass along corridors where files from the Seventies and Eighties sat cheek by jowl with stuff from the 17th century," he said. "But, of course, we were not allowed to look at anything more recent than 1903 [when the current century's persecution of modernist Catholics was begun by Pope Pius XI]."

The Inquisition was introduced as long ago as 1184, under Pope Lucius III, to track down and quash heresy. But it was in 1233 that his suc-

cessor Gregory IX first appointed full-time Inquisitors, drawn from the Dominican and Franciscan orders, to track down heretics who moved swiftly across diocesan boundaries before local bishops could act against them. It was given extensive powers of judgement and could arrest suspects on the testimony of just two anonymous witnesses. In 1253 Pope Innocent IV sanctioned the use of torture to uncover "the truth". Over the centuries that followed, the Inquisition, in its medieval, Spanish and then Roman variants, resulted in thousands of Europeans dying by fire or torture.

When the opening of the archives on all this was announced, many were suspicious of the Vatican's motives - particularly after spokesmen for the Pope announced that the records showed the numbers killed to be far lower than was popularly believed. Rome presented one of the most distinguished of the researchers, Professor John Tedeschi of the University of Wisconsin, to say: "People were sent to the stake, but not in the large numbers that are bandied around."

Those, like John Cornwell of Jesus College, Cambridge, who feared that a whitewash was imminent, insisted that somewhere between 1 million and 10 million had perished in the 800-year Catholic onslaught against heretics. The Pope would select only malleable historians, he warned. And in any case two-thirds of the Vatican records had been lost when Napoleon plundered the archive in 1810.

Interestingly, most historians are impatient with these objections. Tedeschi did much of his research not at the Vatican but in Trinity College, Dublin, and concluded that much of the black legend is a calumny from Protestant propagandists. Nor can all those boldering this view be dismissed as Catholic apologists. The new edition of Anglicanism's magisterial reference book, *Cross's Dictionary of the Christian Church*, has recently pronounced that Inquisitionary courts were, even in Spain, "more benign than secular courts of the period". And the Protestant historian William Monter of Northwestern University, reckons that the Roman In-

quisition (1541-1590) killed 1,235 people across Europe, compared with 1,500 executed for heresy by the secular authorities in the preceding 20 years. Some 2,000 more died at the hands of the Spanish Inquisition.

"What the church did was repellent," said Dr Duffy, "but then so was the behaviour of authority in general." He cautions against the tendency to dehistoricise the Inquisition and see it from the standpoint of our own time.

At the time, church and state were so closely linked that heresy was seen as a form of treason. The impact of the Inquisition was determined by the interests of secular authority. The government in Venice curbed it; the monarchy in Spain exploited it to seize the lands of Jews and Muslims in an epidemic of ethnic cleansing.

"It was an emperor, Frederick II, [rather than a cleric, who 'routinised' the penalty of burning people alive. In England it was Queen Mary who ordered the most concentrated spate of persecution in 16th-century Europe - the bishop charged with it dragged his feet and was reprimanded by the Queen in a letter which he put on display at St Paul's Cross in an attempt to pass the blame and show he was only obeying orders," said Dr Duffy. "Some 72 Protestants were killed by the Inquisition in Italy throughout the whole of 16th century, but 273 were burned in three years by Mary Tudor."

The Inquisition proper never really took in England. Clerics and laity alike there had become too attached to common-law procedures such as trial by jury to be happy introducing the practices of Roman imperial law on which canon law is based. The Inquisition's secrecy, its eagerness to accept denunciations, the absence of counsel for the accused, the lack of any right to confront hostile witnesses, all seemed alien. The two French inquisitors sent to conduct the proceedings against the Knights Templar in 1309 complained bitterly of the lack of qualified torturers in England.

Yet even if all this is not on the scale that received wisdom dictates, it is still bad enough. Why has Rome waited until now to consider apologising? The answer was given to the assembled historians by the Pope's personal theologian, Fr George Cottier. The year 2000, which ushers in the new millennium, should be a year of jubilee. The tradition of jubilee began in ancient Israel. It was a year when the earth was left fallow, debts were cancelled and slaves were set free. It was a time to be reconciled. Throughout its history the Church has maintained this tradition in small ways, but a new millennium must be a Great Jubilee and in preparation there must be a great repentance "of past errors and instances of infidelity, inconsistency and slowness to act".

But Dr Duffy and the other eminent historians of the period were only the first step. "After we had left the Vatican the dozen theologians who had listened as we presented our papers met again, on their own, to decide what to recommend," he said.

To an outsider it may seem obvious. Before the historical experts departed, one of them, the Jewish historian Carlo Ginzburg, made a devastating intervention from the floor, in which he suggested that any talk of asking for pardon for the past was unreal: the dead could not forgive. The Pope and the Church should rather say they

Continued on page 2

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	Leaders and comment	3-7	Books	14-16	The week's TV	28-30
	Features	8-9	Country & Garden	17-19	Radio	31
	Obituaries	10-11	Travel	21-25	Today's TV	32
	FIVE PAGES OF TRAVEL					

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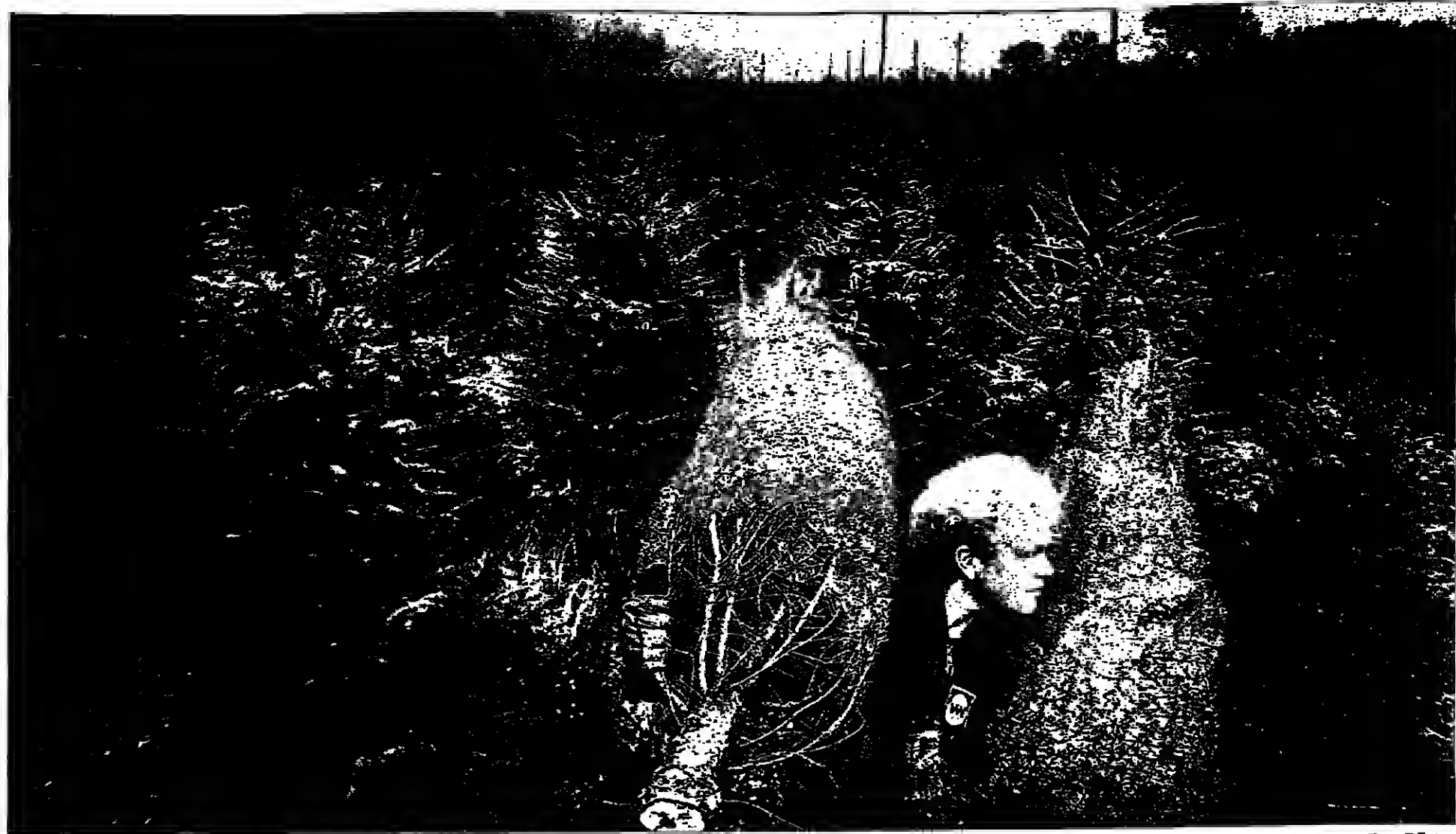
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Everything you ever
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PLUS

People of the Year
as voted by our readers

Christmas Workers No 6: the tree farmer, on a plantation at Christmas Common in the Chilterns

Tom Pileton

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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End Iraq's agony

Sir: We wish to express our grave concern at the bombing of Iraq. We are totally opposed to the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein and have always supported peaceful means to eliminate his weapons of mass destruction. However, any air campaign will surely not remove him or end his chemical and biological weapons production.

Saddam is definitely a threat to his people and world peace, but this military action will not end the threat posed by him. It will more likely strengthen Saddam, who thrives on such confrontations, and put an end to UNSC's work. Moreover, the longer UN sanctions remain in force and the more military strikes are undertaken, the greater the suffering of ordinary Iraqis will be.

Sanctions do not and will not work when the regime in power is a ruthless dictatorship not accountable to its people. It cannot be right to stand aside, watching the suffering of the Iraqi people caused by sanctions and bombing, until Saddam complies fully with Security Council resolutions.

New thinking on the Iraq crisis is needed. It appears that the present approach can only prolong the state of instability in the region and the misery of the Iraqi people. We urge the US and Britain to adopt a new strategy aimed at helping the Iraqi people to induce real change in Iraq and the establishment of a true democratic regime.

This strategy should be based on supporting alternatives to Saddam, no more punishment for the Iraqi people, implementation of UNSC Resolution 688, diplomatic isolation of the Iraqi regime in the region and the world community and the indictment of Saddam for his crimes against humanity. We firmly believe that the long-term interest of all interested parties will be better served in a democratic Iraq.

Dr MAL-RUBEN
Dr NAL-SHADIR
Dr S JASIM
Dr A RIDHA
Dr S LATEEF
Dr A HUNOUSH
Dr S ABDUL-RAZZAK
Dr J KASSAB
Woodford Green, Essex
The signatories are Iraqi academics living in Britain

Sir: Reading those near-hysterical letters (18 December) concerning the bombing of Iraq's armament-making capacity, have those writers

forgotten (or perhaps not even read about) the results of this country's appeasement policy and head-in-the-sand approach to Germany's rearmament in the 1930s?

There was more logic then in our inaction, however reprehensible—we were unready, ill-armed and knowledge of what was happening to the Jews and Gypsies was largely unknown. The result was that Germany gobbled up its surrounding countries and purged itself of Jews and Gypsies—something that took years and many lives to put right.

Today everyone knows about the Kurds and the marsh Arabs, and Iraq's neighbours must be feeling a trifle uneasy, so perhaps those Independent readers might consider the past before condemning the present out of hand.

DERRICK WARREN
Taunton, Somerset

Sir: Mr Blair made a first-class speech in Parliament to explain why we and the Americans were reluctantly taking military action to rid the world of a great evil. It reminded me of that day in 1939 when we reluctantly began one of the few wars in all history to rid Europe of another great evil, an aim eventually achieved with the help of the Americans.

How few of our so-called partners in the European Union have declared their support for an action so completely justified. The irony is that Mr Blair is trying desperately to subordinate our ancient country to a new conglomerate which plans to take control of our finances, our legal system, our borders, our defences and our foreign policy. What action would Mr Blair have been allowed to take if our foreign policy were decided (if that's the word) by a committee in Brussels?

M CM BLACKBURN
Thames Ditton, Surrey

Sir: You state that "sanctions do not stop (Saddam Hussein) buying food and medical supplies for his people" (leading article, 18 December). This is a line we have heard ad nauseam from Tony Blair and Robin Cook. It is a complete lie.

Whilst technically food and medicines are not subject to sanctions (although many requests for medical supplies have been vetoed by the UN Sanctions Committee), the inadequacy of the oil-for-food deal means that Iraq has no money to buy these items. Of the supposed \$10bn a year available through the deal for humanitarian

relief, over 30 per cent is diverted by the UN to non-humanitarian uses. Beyond this, the fall in oil prices coupled with the lack of spare parts for the oil industry means that the projected oil revenue is actually around \$4.4bn—less than half what our government claims, and nowhere near what is needed.

Having been to Iraq recently, I can testify that children are starving, people are drinking water contaminated with sewage, and that the sanctions regime has reduced a healthy, well-fed nation to ruins.

Sanctions are a weapon just as devastating as bombs. Both are illegal and immoral.
ANDREA NEEDHAM
London, E2

Sir: It would be for the good of the Iraqi population if Saddam were brought down. Campaigns against repression and for democracy in Iraq have argued this for many years. But it was the US and the UK who armed him—over all those years. It was the US and the UK who failed to support opposition movements within Iraq. It was the US and the UK whose missiles and threats and sanctions have kept him in power while the people starve.

We should all be asking: How will this bombing disarm Saddam?
JOHN NICHOLSON
Manchester

Sir: Are we going to erect a cenotaph in memory of all the civilian Iraqis whose blood has saved us from the reported threat of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction?
JOHN ATHANASIOU
London N9

'Bias' on the bench

Sir: Calls for Lord Hoffman's resignation are another depressing indication of the blame-and-shame culture which permeates life in the UK. A vibrant, open society warmly accepts occasional errors of judgement even if indeed especially from the most talented; if the best judges can stumble on the pedestal without falling then the rest may rejoice in errors as a sign of dynamism.

STEVEN FOGEL
London EC4

Sir: Should judges with connections to Christian churches be disbarred from cases where the defendant is accused of doing evil? Should judges who believe fervently in the importance of morality be disbarred

from cases where the defendant is accused of immoral behaviour? Lord Hoffman's association with Amnesty should qualify rather than disqualify him from sitting in judgement on Pinochet.

When our country has just killed 25 Iraqi civilians (apparently) and terrified millions (certainly), Lord Hoffman's stand for justice was like a light that gave hope. His colleagues have just snuffed it out.
Dr MICHAEL de PODESTA
Teddington, Middlesex

Sir: So, membership of or support for a society like Amnesty might cause a judge to be biased, but membership of a Masonic order is acceptable?
NOANIE HEFFRON
Glasgow

Power to the bishops

Sir: Are you suggesting that there should be no mechanism for dismissing churchwardens who fail in their office ("The bishops don't need more power", leading article, 18 December)?

One of my churchwardens embezzled a large sum of money last year. Under charity law, his conviction disqualified him from sitting on the Parochial Church Council. But not from being a churchwarden. There was no means by which he could be required to resign. Nor was there any way he could be suspended from office, pending his appearance in court.

Churchwardens are elected by the laity as a whole (not by the Parochial Church Council). But if they let their electors down, somebody needs to protect the laity's interests.
The Rev SIMON TATTON-BROWN
Westhoughton, Greater Manchester

Chernobyl children

Sir: I would like to take this opportunity to thank Darius Sanai and The Independent Magazine for the article about the Chernobyl children published on 5 December. There has been a great response by Independent readers who have offered to host children in their homes. Needless to say, all applicants must be vetted first by social services and the police.

I have spoken to many readers who phoned and clearly they were very touched by the report on the suffering of these children, forgotten by the EU governments which have given so little help to Belarus. I would like to correct some

misunderstandings. Belavia Airlines do not give the charity free flights. The cost is £200 and £20 airport tax per person, costing the charity £450,000 per annum and £50,000 for airport tax. The children come for a period of one month, not two months, to improve their health.

To add to the Chernobyl problem, Belarus is suffering an economic crisis with the collapse of the Belarussian rouble. In every household I visited, children were pale, coughing and sneezing.

At the moment there are 180 children spending Christmas and the New Year in the UK. All those who have already arrived are underweight for their age because of the grave shortage of food in Belarus. This is only the start of the winter season.

I have visited many regions of Belarus and all the parents of the children that have come to the UK ask me to thank the British people for their generosity. Words cannot express how grateful they are. Every parent remarked on their child's health transformation for the better.
VICTOR E MIZZI
Chairman/Trustee
Chernobyl Children Life Line
Haslemere, Surrey

IN BRIEF

Sir: You report two compensatory payouts on 15 December. In one case, a traumatised police sergeant was awarded £75,000 for seeing his fiancée injured in a road accident at work. In the other, a disabled 81-year-old woman was violently sexually assaulted on more than one occasion by another resident in her care home before preventative measures were put in place. She was awarded £2,500. Good to see justice being done, isn't it?
NEIL DUNCAN
Telford, Shropshire

Sir: I was surprised to see Martin Jacques (Wednesday Review, 16 December) refer to a "popular apocryphal tale" of a Chinese emperor who refused a European monarch's invitation to trade. In fact it was the Chinese Emperor Ch'ien-Lung who wrote to none other than King George III in 1793: "Strange and costly objects do not interest me. ... As your ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures."
KATHERINE TANKO
Bristol

Will the Pope apologise for the Inquisition?

Continued from page 1
are ashamed of the past without asking easy absolution.

Things are more tricky than that for the pontiff, however, thanks to the concept of infallibility. This has two aspects. The commonly understood one is that the Pope claims he speaks infallibly when he pronounces, *ex cathedra*, some definitive doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. But the Church also claims there is an infallibility which is revealed through what it calls "the ordinary magisterium", the collective wisdom of its bishops.

The conundrum, therefore, is this: how could the Church have been wrong in

teaching for 1,500 years that "error has no rights"? It is a particular poser for Pope John Paul II, for he was a key player in drafting the Second Vatican Council's 1965 Declaration on Religious Liberty which overturned the old teaching: the demand for freedom of conscience had been a precious resource for him in his confrontation with Polish communism.

Those, like Archbishop Lefebvre, who could not accept that 1,000 years of consistent Catholic teaching had been mistaken, were so outraged that they broke with Rome. So how can the Pope now admit Rome was wrong on the Inquisition without further fracturing its authority?

One of the Pope's men had a go, at the conference in Rome. Fr Jean-Miguel Garrigues traced the emergence of the Church's hounding mentality back to St Augustine. The fatal moment came, he said, when the great fourth-century theologian misconstrued a phrase from the Gospel parable of the wedding feast and decided that the words "compel them to come in" legitimised the use of force in religion. This Augustinian approach then entered politics, with disastrous results.

But Garrigues went on to make a distinction which the Pope had already hinted at. Significantly, John Paul II has spoken not of the need for the Church to

repent its errors but for "the sons and daughters of the church" to do so, as if the Institution itself bore no blame. Garrigues then suggested that the Inquisition was the result of the personal moral failure of individuals. The doctrinal magisterium had been silent on the issue, thus the Church's authority was unscathed.

Eamon Duffy and the other historians were unimpressed. Consider the weight of the history—a succession of inquisitions, under several popes; a hull on witchcraft giving papal endorsement to a ragbag of superstitions that caused countless thousands of harmless or eccentric women to be burnt alive; an

index of forbidden books; a uniform practice of repression and censorship at the heart of the Church's own governance; and its endorsement of a particular relationship between church and state.

"All this surely constitutes more than silence," said Dr Duffy rather scathingly. "It can hardly be treated as the incidental activity of some of the Church's children." Occam's razor might suggest a simpler explanation. "The bald fact is that Roman theology has simply not yet found a way of admitting that the institutional Church itself can err and sin."

There was one man noticeable by his absence at the conference. There was no

sign of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—as the body which was once the Inquisition is now known.

This latter-day Grand Inquisitor may not have recourse to the thumbscrews but his present-day interrogation of Catholic dissidents still carries echoes of the old ways. Hearings are in camera. Accusers remain anonymous. There is no defence council. The accused is initially not even told the specific charges against him, and cannot call witnesses in his defence.

Until all that changes, it may well be that any apology for the terrors of the Inquisition will have rather a hollow ring.

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A gesture to peace that should be followed by others

YESTERDAY'S GESTURE by the Loyalist Volunteer Force is a good answer to all those doom-mongers and pessimists who have gathered around the Northern Ireland peace process. Voices have been raised - ever since John Hume, John Major and others began the process - to say that it could not work, would not work, and should not be attempted. Such voices will probably be heard to deride yesterday's events. But the first decommissioning in Northern Ireland's recent sectarian tragedy is a milestone that should not be underestimated.

The LVF is not an organisation on the scale of the Ulster Defence Association and its offshoots, nor does it have the same capacity to maim and kill as the IRA. But it does constitute a real and potent threat to law and order in the province, responsible for punishment beatings and shootings of Catholics. It has handed in only a small quantity of guns and explosive detonators; but its gesture is a powerful one none the less. It shows what can be done. No one committed to an unending war, or despairing of peace, would do such a thing.

It is also a welcome affirmation of what can be gained from negotiation. The handing-in of the guns follows agreement on the shape of Northern Ireland's government, for so many weeks a frustratingly close compromise. It is this part of the Good Friday agreement which locks Northern Ireland's parties to each other.

None of Northern Ireland's parties can gain what they want without the others. Nationalists cannot gain cross-border bodies, linking their fate with that of the Republic, without the agreement of an assembly and executive on which non-nationalists hold a majority. Unionists cannot gain a new Stormont Assembly without agreeing to share power, and to set up such cross-border bodies. The agreement makes it clear that without fulfilment of all its clauses, the others fall too. It was this that the politicians recognised yesterday.

Most of those politicians have at least a line of communication open to armed groups. Their leadership is crucial if more arms are to be decommissioned, and yesterday they showed that leadership. Mo Mowlam, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and the party leaders who have agreed on those Cabinet seats and cross-border bodies, are to be congratulated.

But, welcome as the LVF's action is, one terrorist decommissioning does not mark the end of a 30-year conflict. Many obstacles still lie ahead. Most formidably, the IRA will have to make a gesture on at least the scale of the LVF's if it is to be admitted to the government of Northern Ireland.

David Trimble, First Minister of the shadow executive, has made it quite clear that if this does not take place, there can be no further progress. He cannot go back on the cast-iron assurances he has given to the Unionist members of the Assembly, and to his own party members. To do so would mean political extinction at the hands of Orange extremists all too ready and willing to wreck negotiations that they have never wanted.

Sinn Féin's role will be pivotal. It has made many compromises to get this far, and has played a positive role again in the last few days. But the party maintains that it can only "influence" the IRA, and will use whatever influence it has to secure decommissioning only once the Assembly and executive are working. It can maintain the fiction of



an arms-length relationship with the IRA, if it smooths its task. But it cannot escape its responsibilities.

It is true that even though the Good Friday agreement envisages decommissioning within two years, nowhere does it make explicit that this should take place before the Assembly and executive are constituted. But it should make no difference, if the will is there, when weapons are handed in. Indeed, a limited hand-over would be in Sinn Féin's best interests. They could take their seats in the executive; they would gain immeasurable goodwill in Dublin, Washington and London; they could start to shape the future of their province.

The IRA do not even need to start large-scale destruction or abandonment of weapons to gain this advantage for their political friends. All they need to do is to show that they understand the fears of their Unionist fellow citizens, and their British and Irish neighbours. All they need to do is to hand in one package of arms from their vast cache, to show that they mean it. When they see the beneficial results of that, we can hope that such actions will become a habit.

No one wants to see republicanism humiliated in "surrender". But what we have a right to expect is that all paramilitaries, including the Provisional IRA, emulate the gesture their opponents have made, and soon.

Bombs shouldn't stop impeachment

THERE IS never a good time to impeach a US president, since the so-called head of the free world is always busy striving to pacify some world trouble-spot. It must seem particularly cruel to Bill Clinton that he faces trial at exactly the same time as he is ordering troops into battle; but to be realistic, when has he been free of such troubles? When he was ordering marines into Somalia? When he was making peace in Northern Ireland? Or on the previous occasions when he has bombed Iraq?

National leaders have always been assailed without regard to the crises their nations face. Andrew Johnson, the only other president to be impeached, was struggling with the challenge of reconstruction after the American Civil War. Democrats showed no mercy to Richard Nixon, embroiled in Vietnam, opening up Western policy to China, and attempting détente with the Soviet Union. Closer to home, Margaret Thatcher was preparing for the Gulf war when she was politically assassinated.

Bombing in the Gulf makes no difference to the issues facing Congress. Either the President has perjured him-

self, and committed the "high crimes and misdemeanors" of which the Constitution speaks, or he has not.

The world's cynicism about the President's motives in ordering military action should encourage a decision. The impeachment vote may bring the crisis to a head, and renew America's self-confidence. If Congress decides today to allow President Clinton to escape, he can face the world with his mandate renewed. But if he is impeached, his authority will be irreparably damaged. Then, for all our sakes, he should resign, and allow a successor to govern with authority.

Gone shopping

PLANS TO "reward" those informing on drink-drivers will raise a ragged cheer in populist quarters. Wiser and cooler heads should be more wary. Given Britain's problem of "neighbour rage", which this week saw even a former Downing Street press secretary cautioned by police, it is more than likely that giving money to sneaks would lead to a rash of hoax calls, like that which recently afflicted the Deputy Prime Minister in his Hull constituency. Forget the nation of shopkeepers: we seem all too eager to become a nation of shoppers.

Cruise missiles won't stop the dangers facing US democracy

IN the history of the United States there has been a moment like this. A president, fighting impeachment, has decided simultaneously to start a war. The House of Representatives patriotically supports the troops while attempting to remove from office their commander-in-chief. And the man Republicans regard as an untrustworthy draft-dodger has control of the mightiest military machine in the world.

Americans are open-mouthed with bewilderment and concern at the bizarre collision of events. The two problems which have dogged the US throughout the 1990s like toothache - the implacable hostility of Iraq and the persistently scandal-ridden behaviour of its president - have crashed together the week before Christmas.

Citing a "clear and present danger", President Clinton is risking the lives of American servicemen at precisely the time his own political life is most under threat. Forever lucky in his enemies, Mr Clinton's highly partisan opponents are redoubting their efforts to get the world to recognise he is the liar-in-chief, adulterer-in-chief and perjurer-extraordinaire.

Perhaps we should have become used to expecting the impossible. After all, this is a year which began with the revelation that Bill Clinton had oral sex with a 21-year-old intern, but so far has claimed as the highest political casualty not Mr Clinton but his most outspoken opponent, the sacked House Speaker Newt Gingrich. Gingrich's successor as Speaker, Bob Livingston, has now been forced to admit to adulterous affairs, though he will not resign. As someone who has faced every scandal since Bill Clinton first began to run for the presi-

dency in 1991, and who watched the Iran-Contra affair, I have never seen the politicians in Washington so angry with each other or so disconnected from the American people.

Today's expected vote in the House of Representatives does have a precedent. It is the first impeachment since the presidency of Andrew Johnson in 1868, but the domestic drama is now inextricably linked, as Johnson's never was, to an attempt to destroy a foreign leader and reassert American authority in a military adventure. Both Mr Clinton and his political enemies have embarked on breathtakingly risky courses of action without any kind of road-map for how to proceed.

Most Americans regard taking on Saddam Hussein as justified and inevitable. But the timing, as Lawrence Eagleburger, the former Secretary of State, puts it, "smells to high heaven". Of all the hats a president must wear, the one of commander-in-chief has never quite fitted Clinton. For him to assume significant military leadership in the twilight of his presidency is truly extraordinary.

Beyond draft avoidance in Vietnam, everything about the Clinton administration has seemed unilitary in character, profoundly different from Bush, Reagan or Carter. Most obviously, Clinton is the first president of a new generation, a man whose formative years were not spent in World War Two. While the Bush White House was full of military veterans, President Clinton's team is more like a university common room in which those with military experience are conspicuous by their rarity.

The first week of his administration began with a clash of cultures with the



GAVIN ESLER
The collision of war and scandal begs a question: why does this great nation have such shabby leaders?

military brass over whether to allow homosexuals to serve in uniform. But whatever their doubts about the character of the commander-in-chief, American servicemen have loyally served him. Ever since the Gulf war ended eight years ago, facing down Saddam Hussein has been America's diplomatic *Groundhog Day*, the Hollywood movie in which every morning you wake up to the same problems.

With the exception of 1995, there has been a US-Iraq crisis every year since 1990. Two weeks ago a senior Clinton administration official told me to expect another confrontation. He warned that the US would show itself to be on an extremely short fuse. This official, one of a handful who direct national security policy, refused to predict the timing, but agreed that the crisis could come before Christmas. The official said Clinton only decided against bombing Baghdad in November because "you do not shoot a man who has his hands up". But the official also predicted, correctly, that the mis-

sion of the UN weapons inspectors was doomed and that the US would be forced to try to do with bombs what the UN had failed to do by inspections - namely degrade Saddam's military capacity. He acknowledged that the American people were tired of perennial High Noon confrontations and wanted the Saddam problem sorted out for good.

What strikes me now as curious about this conversation is that the Clinton official was prepared to brief me, a foreign journalist, extensively, while the president himself failed to prepare the American people. Surprising Saddam is one thing. Surprising America's voters, allies and world opinion is another and adds to the suspicion that this has been partly the War of Clinton's Zipper. Around one in four Americans shares this view, suspecting that the President may have abused his power by ordering the military strike to distract from the impeachment hearings, less a matter of policy than of crude politics.

After all, Clinton did order cruise missile attacks against Sudan and Afghanistan last August, just days after the humiliation of admitting that he had lied for months about Monica Lewinsky. This week's attack may be a coincidence too far. But the far more significant point is that Clinton's lack of credibility is now so damaging that it is impossible to view anything he does except through the prism of his scandals. He could feed the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes and yet a large percentage of Americans would view the miracle as another cynical stunt from their political Houdini. His own survival - which still looks likely but is by no means guaranteed - is of less interest

now than the damaged credibility of the American system of government, if impeachment proceedings stretch for months into 1999.

America's democracy is resilient. The republic has survived the Civil War and civil rights, the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour and being torn apart by Vietnam. Americans endured the national tragedy of Watergate. They will surely endure the national farce of the Lewinsky scandal. For Nixon it was once a profoundly serious question of what did the President know and when did he know it. For many Americans that has been replaced by the Clinton question of what did the President touch and when did he touch it.

But the collision of war and scandal has now gone to the core of the American political dilemma as the new millennium approaches. Why has America endured 40 years of failed presidencies, a string of one-term inadequates punctuated by the two-term scandal presidencies of Nixon, Reagan and Clinton? Why does this great democracy produce such shabby leaders? Why does the United States export political ideas abroad and yet see fewer and fewer of its own citizens bother to vote at home?

The twilight of the Clinton presidency may not provide the answers to what has gone wrong. But it does provide a clear example. And you can be sure it will prove easier to solve the Saddam problem than the sclerosis within the American political system. The mess in Washington remains the clear and present danger that cruise missiles cannot fix.

Gavin Esler is the author of *'The United States of Anger'*

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MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

The bombing of Iraq • Impeachment of Bill Clinton • Lord Hoffmann • Pension reform • The Football Association

IMPEACHMENT OF BILL CLINTON

Opinions on whether the President's conduct merits his removal by the Congress of the United States

USA TODAY

IF THERE is a silver lining to such an ethically clouded climate, it is that the Founders fully expected such antics and designed the impeachment system accordingly. They gave the House only the power to accuse, leaving the Senate responsibility for removing the President from office, and then only by a vote that requires a broad consensus. If Clinton is impeached, a nation turned off by cheap partisanship - from both sides - deserves no less.

FRANKFURTER
RUNDSCHAU
Germany

AN IMPEACHMENT charge before the United States Senate would therefore touch the very core of democracy: the fall of a president - even when it is comes constitutionally and formally secured - represents the annulment of the voted will of the people. Such a step can only be justified by grievous practices such as endangering democracy, the state order, or national security.

NEW YORK TIMES
US

MR CLINTON'S offenses threaten us with the possibility that Americans will see him as a role model. They cry out for condemnation so that no citizen will be tempted to follow his example or regret his departure... but do not threaten the future of a republic that defines itself through politics. We elected him to lead a great nation. He became a prince of disorder. Now it is up to Congress and the public to limit the damage caused by his irresponsibility.

TAGES-ANZEIGER
Switzerland

AMERICANS TEND to take things to the limits and live excess to the full. In their eyes, no political mistake is too great for the right way out to be at the end of the tunnel. As a result, Washington's politicians can see nothing funny in the fact hundreds of them have spent 11

months obsessed with a sex scandal in the White House. Quite the opposite: the lawmakers, professors and commentators involved see it as their sacred duty to take part in the search for truth in the "William Jefferson Clinton" case. Meanwhile, the rest of the world worries about the US President's authority.

BOSTON GLOBE
US

WHAT CLINTON deserves and what the country needs is not a symbolic rebuke from which he will bounce back unscathed. There is only a momentary sting in being censured; impeachment will sting through history. Clinton has lied and deceived. It is fitting that his lies and deceit be the cause, finally, of his fall. A president who violates the people's trust and dishonors his office forfeits his right to the White House. The words are those of the Democrats' proposed resolution of censure. But they sum up perfectly the case for impeachment.

DAILY OKLAHOMAN
US

THE RULE of law should apply to everyone, including this corrupt, unethical president. For high crimes and misdemeanors, the House of Representatives should impeach Clinton. The Senate will determine whether he can continue in office.

STRAITS TIMES
Singapore

BARRING A last-minute deal, it looks like the US is about to condemn itself to a Senate trial that may last as long as six months. As the world tries desperately to avoid an economic slump, its sole remaining superpower will treat itself to a semen-stained dress, scratchy tape-recordings of two not particularly brainy women and grainy video clips of the "Big Creep" squirming in his seat as he parses impenetrable definitions of sexual acts. The Dow may melt in the meantime, the dollar may sink, but the Senate will devote itself to adding a new chapter to the Kama Sutra. Is this for real?

JORDAN TIMES

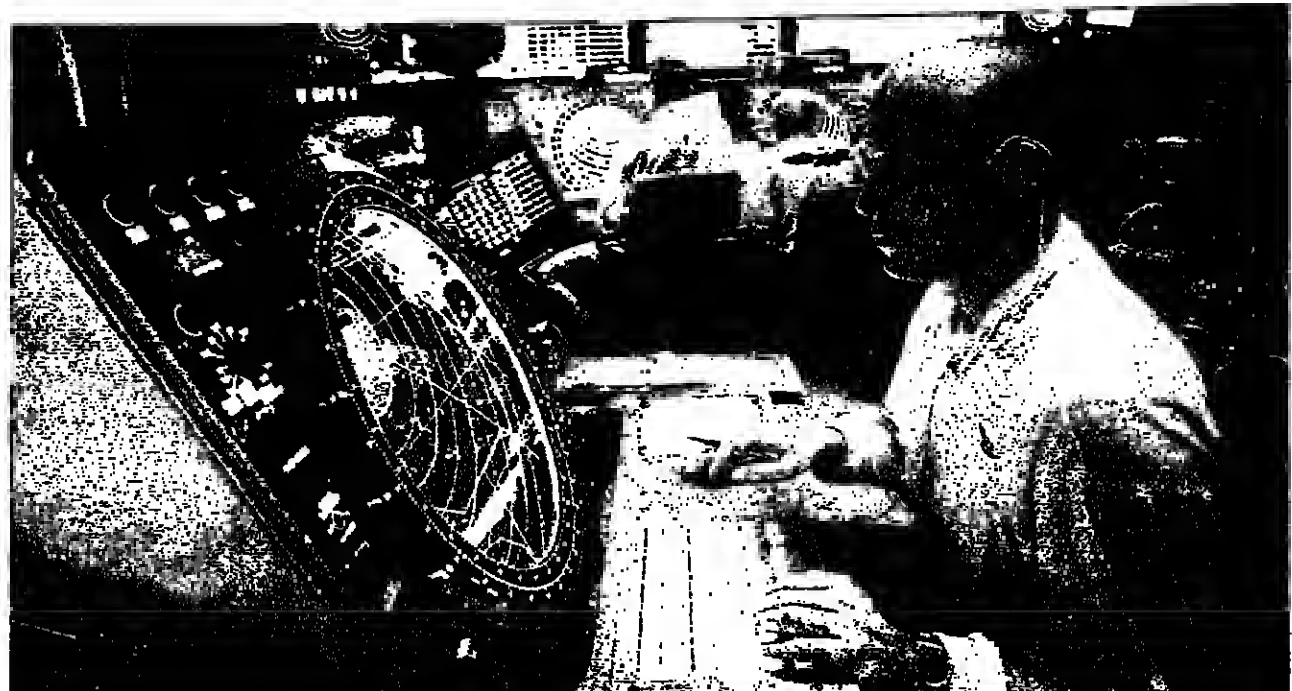
WHY WAS such military action necessary now or, more to the point, necessary at all? The fact of the matter is this: after almost eight years of sanctions and inspections, Saddam Hussein is still in power. The US and Britain, so they say, believe that Iraq still has the capability of assembling weapons of mass destruction. Over 1 million people - mostly children - against whom no one held any grudge, are dead. When does it end? US officials last night could offer us no assurances, while commentators last night expressed surprise that Iraqi people were moving around Baghdad during the attack. It shouldn't come as a surprise - after all, they are the only ones who have had to endure the last eight years.

HONG KONG STANDARD
China

CLINTON'S CRITICS would like to think that the strike against Iraq was a diversionary tactic to postpone the House vote on the impeachment motion. That is too facile an argument unless the Republicans believe that US use of its power will stop some wavering or moderate party members from impeaching him. The order for an immediate strike was to show US resolve, and to act before the Muslim religious period of Ramadan, which is beginning in a few days. Really, the dispute is over how best to proceed against Saddam. It was the UN that took him to task and imposed sanctions. It is for the UN to resolve this problem. If force must be used, it must only be with the authority of the UN, and not arbitrarily.

CHINA DAILY

CLOSE ALLIES of the United States and Britain during the Gulf War eight years ago have distanced themselves from the new round of attacks on Iraq. The reason for this is simple. Hopes for a peaceful resolution of the Iraqi crisis had not really been exhausted before the military strike broke out. The use of force is against the will of all peace-loving peoples. The US-British joint operation disregarded UN conventions. A world run by big powers, acting outside the framework of international relations, has subjected itself to a clear threat of power politics.



THE BOMBING OF IRAQ

Verdicts on the decision by the United States and Great Britain to launch air strikes against Iraq as punishment for its failure to cooperate with the UN arms inspectors

THE WASHINGTON POST
US

THE CAMPAIGN must be sustained enough to gravely damage Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, and the military upon which he depends for survival. It should aim to cause as few civilian casualties as possible, but must be undertaken with the understanding that only Saddam's removal from power can erase the threat that Iraq currently poses to its region and the world. No one should be naive enough to expect that any of the players in this drama have or could put domestic politics entirely out of their thoughts. But Clinton and his political adversaries must keep these two crises as separate as they possibly can.

ASAHI SHIMBUN
Japan

WE URGE the Security Council to resume its proper duty and take a unified approach toward Iraq. It is essential that trust is restored among the United States

and Great Britain, who resorted to force; Russia and China, who opposed it; and France, which is sceptical of it. The Japanese government promptly expressed its support of the military action, which hardly contributes a solution to the Iraq problem.

SYDNEY MORNING
HERALD
Australia

THE UNITED States called off strikes against Iraq at the last minute a month ago, after Iraq's modest concessions. Bill Clinton's administration had said that it would strike without warning, if Iraq did not honour its promise to co-operate with the UN inspectors. The White House has been circumspect, as Saddam repeatedly flouted the inspectors over the past few weeks, and now says that its timing has been dictated by circumstance. It is impossible to disprove that argument, but this conflict remains the strangest coincidence yet.

LE MONDE
France

THE DECISION to resort to force against Iraq was a bad one in every sense. It was bad in form: the Security Council wasn't consulted, even though Washington claims to act in the name of the international community; and it was bad in reasoning - there were no grounds other than Butler's suspect report. This American decision could so easily end in catastrophe.

TORONTO STAR
Canada

SADDAM HUSSEIN cannot be allowed to assume that the international community has lost the will to oppose him. The bombings aim to harass him, degrade his ability to produce weapons of mass destruction, and erode confidence in his regime. Few believe he will willingly change course. But if Saddam will not co-operate and cannot be ousted, then he must be contained.

LORD HOFFMANN'S JUDGMENT

British views on the Law Lords' decision to invalidate their previous ruling to allow extradition proceedings against General Pinochet

THE SUN

THE PINOCHET ruling is extraordinary. It means that not even the highest court in the land can be considered free from bias. How it could have slipped Lord Hoffmann's mind to mention his connection with Amnesty International is beyond us. His mistake has caused a huge political row here and abroad. He surely cannot keep his job.



Human Rights into domestic law, such issues will shortly assume far greater importance.

DAILY MAIL

NOBODY DISPUTES Hoffmann's legal brilliance. But however rigorous his approach, and however dispassionate his judgment may have been, his behaviour was lacking in common sense. In law, appearances are everything. Is justice really seen to be done, when a judge seems to have a particular and partisan interest?

THE GUARDIAN

ONE CAN only hope that the next panel of law lords will take the view that General Pinochet does not have the immunity he claims. Whether they do or not, the victory of tactics over principle has interrupted the search for justice.

PENSION REFORM

Verdicts on the Government's proposals for changes to welfare provision for the elderly

DAILY MAIL

WHAT IS well understood is the doomsday scenario of fewer and fewer workers having to support more and more pensioners living longer and longer. As the decades pass, the state pension - already inadequate - will be worth only small change.

THE GUARDIAN

THE PROPOSALS are a deft answer to the question - what pensions policy is consistent with declining funding, and won't involve electorally unpopular taxes on the middle classes. But it won't necessarily provide pensions for the poorest that an advanced industrialised country can feel proud of.

THE TIMES

BY OFFERING a second pension rather than income sup-

port to the low-paid, the Government has removed the stigma of forcing them to rely on means-tested welfare.

FINANCIAL TIMES

NEW LABOUR can claim that increased public spending is going to those in need, for which it deserves full marks. Despite the caveats, many of the deficiencies of the present system are being addressed.

THE MIRROR

IF THE Government did not come up with a new plan for pensions, we would have millions of poverty-stricken old people. Everyone who is working and earning reasonable money will have to make a provision. Not the sort of thing which leads to cheering, but a crucial step in creating a welfare state for the 21st century.

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Opinion after the resignation of the chief executive of the Football Association

THE TIMES

THE FOOTBALL Association may be spared animosity, because the spectacle it presents is too ridiculous to sustain hatred. None of the proposals to streamline the FA will be of any merit unless they ensure capable leadership. For the moment, it is certain that the FA, whenever it strides the corridors of power, will throw open a door and march straight into the broom cupboard. (Kevin McCarra)

EVENING
STANDARD

THE RESIGNATION of Mr Graham Kelly is a major event in a sport where the investigation of alleged wrongdoing has an unrivalled reputation for statelessness. Not to say toothlessness. No doubt the FA will be toiling night and day to bring us

the truth. When it does so, let us hope it can shed light on the difference between a "grant", a "gift" and a "loan".

THE EXPRESS

KELLY TYPIFIED the incompetent face of English football administration. He loomed over a game riddled with scandal and corruption. The FA should take this opportunity to appoint a more forward thinking administrator for what is now a multi-billion-pound industry.

THE MIRROR

IT'S THE best news for English soccer for a long time - Graham Kelly has quit as boss of the FA. He is an arrogant, pig-headed, smug, self-opinionated fool, who acted as if football were there for his own aggrandisement. Football is better off without him.

MISCELLANEOUS

Stories from around the world

BANGKOK POST
Thailand

POLICE DESTROYED over 20 rai of opium poppy fields in mountainous areas in Phop Phra district. About 30 officers were sent to slash and burn poppies planted by tribespeople. A tribesman was found harvesting poppies, but managed to flee arrest. Police said villagers who grow poppies have introduced modern technology which allows year-round cultivation and improved yields.

DES MOINES
REGISTER
US

A GROUP of Iowa pork producers is inviting hunters to come

and shoot hogs. Hog Hunt '98 is to draw attention to the plight of the American farmer. Hunters will be charged \$100 to shoot a hog. "Some have criticized the hunt," Muller said, "because they think it's cruel to kill an animal. What do they think they're doing when they eat beef, pork or bacon?"

SYDNEY MORNING
HERALD
Australia

SYDNEY IS running out of Christmas trees as the demand reaches unprecedented levels. Some suppliers shut up shop two weeks early, telling clients they would have to settle for the plastic. People have got sick of plastic and want the real thing.

RESEARCH BY SALLY CHATTERTON

QUOTES OF
THE WEEK

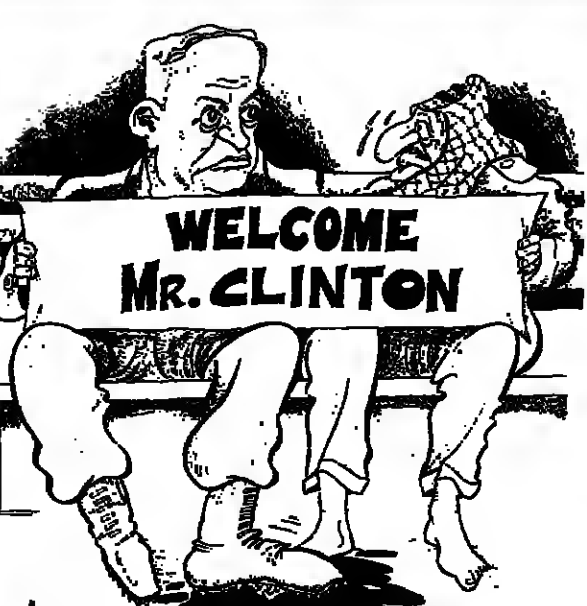
"For a serious story it's a single buttock perch, for a lighter item it's the full two-buttock perch." Kirsty Young, Channel 5 newsreader (pictured)

"It's never crossed my mind." President Bill Clinton when asked whether he would resign

"I wonder if you thought, as the bleeding women and children were carried into hospitals, that those who were diminished and degraded were not the Iraqis, but us - reduced to being a tail on this verminous and mangy Desert Fox." George Galloway, Labour MP, addressing Tony Blair in the Commons

"I don't like humans much. Which is not a very good recipe for elective politics." Alan Clark, Tory MP

"It is not elitist enough, in my view. If I had my way, admission to opera houses would be entirely forbidden to riff-raff like you." Rupert Christiansen, opera critic

PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS
USTHE CITIZEN
CanadaBALTIMORE SUN
USLIANHE ZAOBAO
SingaporeNIDA AL WATAN
Lebanon

The year of living rather less than dangerously

IT'S SO difficult trying to synthesise a busy year on to one page, write our good friends Sam and Marcie Lapwing, from Boise, Idaho, at the top of their festive reindeer-and-robin encrusted cards. We met the Lapwings on holiday in India 12 years ago and haven't seen them since, but every Christmas, without fail, we get this detailed report of how the family are getting along.

"We've been to a lotta places and done a whole bunch of interesting things," the Lapwings' newsletter continues. "Marcie has been nominated to the National Board of the Scleroderma Foundation, and you may have caught Sam's face on Dateline TV in the middle of September talking about stem-cell transplantation in scleroderma and related conditions."

Why are other people's lives so

much more interesting than mine. I thought gloomily, having heard all about the very lovely wedding in the woods of Lake Tahoe that the entire Lapwing family attended in April and what a truly rewarding time Marcie's mother had visiting kinfolk in Maine.

More to the point, why are other people's memories so much sharper than mine? Marcie and Sam complain that it's difficult to synthesise a year on to one page. I have problems trying to synthesise what I did with the back door key last night. It's unlikely we went to a wedding last spring - my friends get divorced - but if we did it certainly wasn't in a wood. I haven't seen inside a wood for years. And I don't believe my mother has visited her kinfolk recently because they're all in the "southern Shan

SUE ARNOLD
Stem-cell transplantation was pivotal to Sam in 1998. Losing my glove loomed large in my year

states" of upper Burma, and if she had she would definitely have asked me to feed her cat.

This loss of memory is particularly galling because I used to

have a brilliant memory, especially for numbers. Ask me to reel off any of my Austrian friend's three 13-digit telephonenumber in Vienna, Salzburg and St Anton and out they would come pat, digit perfect. Now I can't remember the four-figure pin number of my credit card which I use practically every day.

There are, I know, all sorts of ingenious methods you can employ to remember important things, like whether you've switched the iron off or sent those vital cheques to the bank. The best way I was reliably advised by a psychologist called George is to verbalise - yes, of course, he's American. In other words you don't just switch the iron off and pull out the plug. You say: "I'm switching the iron off and taking the plug out." Better still, you talk to the iron as a friend. You say:

"Hello iron, I'm going to switch you off and then I'm going to take out your plug and put you away." This way, said George, you build up a relationship with the iron, and, since relationships are important to humans, particularly women, there is no way you would ever forget how the relationship ended.

None of this I appreciate would be of much use when trying to synthesise a year, busy or banal, on to a Christmas card to send back to Marcie and Sam. The other drawback is having to refer to yourself in the third person, like a character in a novel. "Heavens, is it really a year since Sue left one of her gloves, her brand new gloves, in the back of the commuter car? My, how time flies."

On second thoughts it's not other people's lives that are more

interesting than mine, it's other people's priorities. Stem-cell transplantation was pivotal to Sam in 1998, losing my glove, my brand new glove, in the back of a cab looms large in my year. But I do see it's not the sort of thing you record in a Christmas card. Some might say that scleroderma isn't exactly festive either, and, at the risk of sounding disloyal to our good friends in Idaho, I would agree with them. There are only two requirements of a Christmas card message. One: it should be brief; two: it should be legible. You will have gathered by now that I haven't sent my Christmas cards yet, but no panic, there's still plenty of time despite all those dire warnings. What I need is two completely uninterrupted hours to write the wretched things.

The woman in the seat beside me at Battersea Arts Centre one year had the right idea. We were watching a production of the Bible, not the whole thing just the Old Testament, performed by a cast of four. They barked at nothing - the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Philistine hordes, the multitudes passing through the Red Sea, we had it all. The fact that there were only three people in the audience (it had poor reviews) did nothing to dampen the cast's enthusiasm, not even when the woman beside me opened her handbag, took out a stack of Christmas cards and began writing them. "Stay thy hand," said the angelic host, all two of them, as Abraham lifted his knife to sacrifice Isaac. "You don't happen to know the postal code for Swindon?" whispered the woman beside me.

THE SATURDAY PROFILE

KOFI ANNAN, UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL

The forceful peacemaker

WHEN THE first cruise missiles slammed into their targets in Baghdad on Wednesday evening, Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary General, did something unusual. He retired to his expansive 38-floor office at UN headquarters in New York, sat at his mahogany desk and slowly smoked a cigar. "I have never seen him do that before," one of his aides remarked later, "but I think he needed it for solace."

Annan, a descendant of Ghanaian tribal chiefs, who is now upon his second anniversary as the world's diplomat-in-chief, is not a man who sulks or dwells on his setbacks. The following evening, even as the second wave of bombing was under way in Iraq, he was the host at a Christmas party for senior UN staff at his official residence. He behaved as he always does at such functions - he smiled, joked with colleagues and gave the impression that, whatever was going on outside, he was enjoying himself.

But when Annan, who is 60, told the world's press on Wednesday that the start of the aerial campaign over Iraq marked a "sad day" for the UN and for him personally, he surely meant it. His brief statement had been revised three times by his speechwriters upstairs. The Secretary General knew he had to be careful to express his dismay without giving the impression of criticising either Washington or London, or that he was siding with Saddam Hussein in the crisis. But whatever else he said, he wanted to convey his sense of loss.

As the first Secretary General to have risen through the UN ranks to attain the post, with a career of more than 30 years in the organisation, Annan had a huge investment in preventing renewed violence in the Gulf. He was mostly invisible to the world until February this year, when he made his dramatic journey to Baghdad to attempt to talk down Saddam from his position that his presidential palaces were out of bounds for the UN weapons inspectors of Unscam. Against mighty odds, he succeeded. Saddam agreed to reopen the palaces in a memorandum of understanding and for that period, at least, military action was forestalled.

The Baghdad dash was mighty risky for Annan. Even his personal safety may have been in peril. When the hour came for his meeting with the Iraqi leader he was whisked away in government limousines to an undisclosed location, with only three of his aides allowed to travel with him. He undertook the mission knowing that he might fail, and aware that neither Washington nor London was enthusiastic about it. Indeed, when he returned home he got no thanks from the US administration and scorn from some members of Congress, who accused him of appeasement. But Annan, we now know, is not frightened of taking risks.

He demonstrated similar courage just two weeks ago when he diverted from a visit to Tunisia to meet Muammar Gaddafi.

The Libyan leader was, and still is, dithering over whether to surrender two suspects in the 1988 Lockerbie tragedy to stand trial in the Netherlands. By agreeing to the meeting, Annan raised hopes of a breakthrough even though he himself knew that immediate results were unlikely. He reasoned, however, that refusing to

LIFE STORY
Born: 3 April 1938
Origins: A twin, son of a Ghanaian Fante tribal chief
Education: Boarding school run by Methodist missionaries; university, Kumasi; Macalister College, US; Institut des Hautes Etudes Internationales, Geneva
Marriages: Two, with two children by his first wife. Present wife, Nane Lagergren (pictured), a Swedish lawyer/painter
Career at the UN: World Health Organisation, 1962-1971; Personnel Services UNHCR, 1976-80; UN New York, admin and management, 1983-6; Assistant Secretary General of Office of Human Resources 1986-90; Under-Secretary General, Peacekeeping Operations 1993-5; UN Special Envoy to former Yugoslavia 1995-6; UN Secretary General, 1997.
On himself: "I am by nature a conciliator, but I can be firm when it is necessary. I'm not one of those people who believe that you have to pound the table to be tough."
Others on him: "I had my staff here look into your background and couldn't find anyone who didn't like you." (Jesse Helms)
On subduing Iraq: "You cannot do it from the air. The Gulf war proved that"



meet Gaddafi, when he was so close in the next-door country, could have caused harm to the efforts to secure the two suspects for trial. In Libya, too, there was reason to worry about Annan's security. After being diverted from Tripoli to the coastal port of Sirte, he was invited first to board a limousine for the overland journey. Along the way, he was bundled from the car

to a four-wheel-drive vehicle for a humpy ride across the desert. Separated from his security detail and from all of his aides, he was, late in the evening, delivered to Gaddafi in his traditional, vaulted tent.

In two years, in fact, Annan has managed to defy all predictions of how he would turn out as Secretary General. His candidacy for the post was championed by the United States and its then Ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, really for only one reason - he was not Boutros Boutros Ghali, his Egyptian predecessor who had been expecting to serve a second five-year term. With his sometimes haughty and lecturing manner, Boutros Ghali had over time fallen far out of favour with Washington, never more so than when he chastised Western capitals for investing too much energy in the "rich man's" war in Bosnia while ignoring conflicts in more remote corners, notably in Africa.

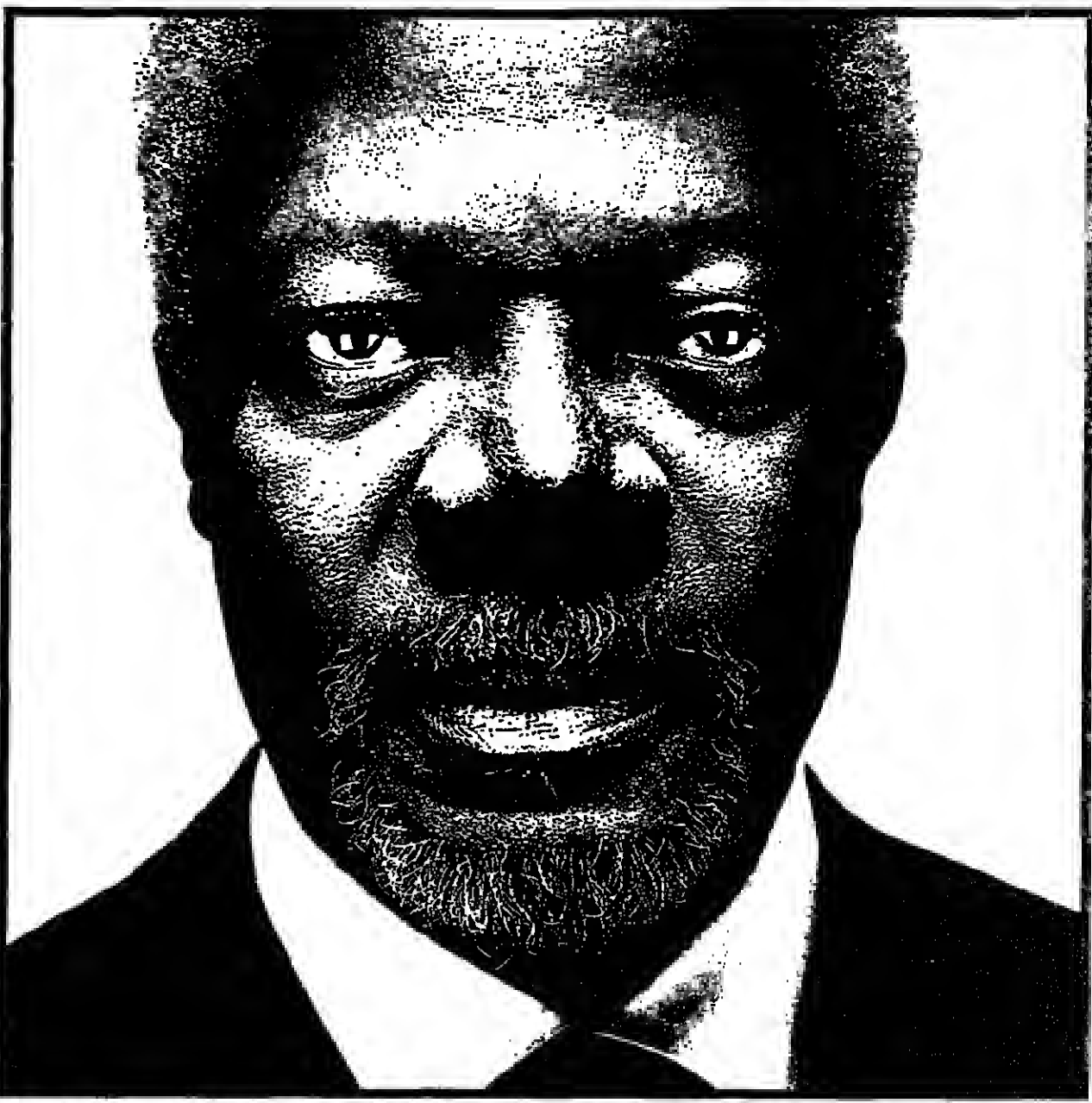
Against fierce opposition from France, Albright fought for Annan because he appeared suited to effecting a low-profile stewardship of the UN organisation: someone, above all, who would work better as a manager of the institution and not a maker of diplomatic waves. The United States wanted an efficient chief executive whose first task would be to instil some order into the morass of UN bodies and agencies and bring about the reforms that Boutros Ghali had been so reluctant to carry through. As some observers put it at the time, Annan promised to be more secretary than general. He would be competent but not inspiring.

Certainly, that was the promise of Annan's career up to that point. The son of a district manager for a chemicals company in Ghana, who was in line to become chief of the Fante tribe, Annan was sent to boarding school in Ghana.

He first travelled first to America in 1958, to attend summer school in Harvard. Thereafter, he won a Ford Foundation scholarship to attend Macalister College in St Paul, Minnesota, where he graduated with a degree in economics. Soon afterwards, he joined the UN family for the first time, working for the World Health Organisation in Geneva. Apart from a break in 1972 to take a master's degree in management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he has remained with the UN ever since, mostly in New York where he has held such senior posts as head of budget affairs and personnel.

Married twice, Annan has two children by his first marriage to a Nigerian, which ended in divorce. In 1981 he married a Swedish ex-judge and painter, Nane Lagergren. By some almost cosmic confluence of destinies, she is the niece of the vanished Swedish diplomat, Raoul Wallenberg, who saved 100,000 Hungarian Jews from Nazi death camps.

Annan's first splash into the headlines came in 1990, when he persuaded Saddam to allow the repatriation of 500,000 foreign workers in Kuwait who had become



The bombing of Iraq marks a setback for Kofi Annan's vision of multilateralism

Nigel Parry/Katz

trapped there after the Iraqi invasion. Then, under Boutros Ghali, he assumed the pivotal post of Under-Secretary General for peacekeeping. It was a position that could have ruined his reputation. Under his watch, the UN suffered the double humiliation of the fiasco in Somalia, including the incident that left 18 US servicemen dead, and the ultimately dismal attempt to set up the so-called "safe havens" in Bosnia. Almost worse, however, was the outbreak of genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Half a million Rwandans died in the slaughter, while the West and the UN essentially watched from the sidelines. It transpired later that Annan's office had received intelligence before the massacres clearly warning that an immense tragedy was at hand.

While the UN caught the blame for the failure of the safe havens, Annan refrained from saying what he and the whole institution were feeling. They were certain that the responsibility lay principally with the governments who had failed to supply the UN with anything like the manpower necessary to defend them. "Screaming and getting bitter and being angry is negative energy," he once said about his reluctance to speak out. "It takes a lot of energy out of you and doesn't help."

On reform, Annan has not disappointed the Americans. He has stripped a thousand posts from the organisation, and has chosen strong new voices for some of its bodies, including the former Irish Prime Minister Mary Robinson to watch over human rights. And he has replaced a system whereby agencies were led by independent heads reporting individually to the Secretary General, with a cabinet system of leadership. Slowly the UN is turning from

a bureaucracy of scattershot chaos to one of co-ordinated action.

Otherwise, however, he has surprised everybody. It is common nowadays to hear him likened to the only other UN leader who inspired common awe. Sweden's Dag Hammarskjöld, who served as Secretary General for eight years from 1953. "He has been a revelation even to his admirers," commented Shashi Tharoor, a trusted senior aide. "He has shown that he has diplomatic skills that had never really been tested before. We thought we knew the man and his qualities, but really we did not." France, which was so opposed to Annan's appointment, reveres him today almost as a national hero.

Annan, almost improbably, has also become something of a star in Manhattan, where and his wife have become much-courted fixtures on the frenzied society circuit of dinners, galas and fundraisers. Annan has even sought out friends in Hollywood and has recruited the likes of Michael Douglas, Sharon Stone and even Luciano Pavarotti as UN "Ambassadors for Peace". When the UN this summer published a book called *The Quotable Kofi Annan*, some suggested it was trying to forge a cult status for the Secretary General.

Importantly, Annan has restored morale in an institution that has every reason to feel low. His staff worship him. One official said this week: "If Kofi asked me to scrub floors for him, I'd do it."

Certainly, he is more than Washington bargained for. Relations with the Clinton administration are, at best, strained. When Annan wrote a letter to Saddam Hussein on 13 November urging him to fall back into line with weapons inspections, he once

more elicited a climbdown that forestalled air strikes. Likewise, he is disappointed with Washington. While recognising that much fault lies with Iraq for today's crisis, he believes that the Clinton administration erred this summer by failing to show flexibility towards Iraq. Annan, meanwhile, has got nowhere in persuading the US to deliver the roughly \$1bn it owes the UN in arrears, in spite of his achievements on reform.

His sadness today stems not just from the bombardment itself, but from the setback it represents to his vision of multilateralism.

"Kofi is under strain right now because he believes rather passionately in peaceful resolution. It is bred into his bones," says Tharoor. By unleashing their missiles, London and Washington have resorted to unilateralism and, for now, have brutally short-circuited the UN and its role.

Kofi Annan, with his soft, lilting intonation and greying goatee, above all emanates humanity. It is a quality that is at the core of his personality. He is determined that that same quality should be reflected from him on to the UN organisation as a whole. Humanity, after all, is what the UN is about.

The kindest tribute in this troubled week came from the security guard who dressed up, as he does every Christmas, as Santa Claus at Thursday's Christmas party. Kofi and Nane, he said, "had transformed this house and made it feel like home".

He was referring to the Secretary General's residence. But he could equally well have been speaking of the whole United Nations family.

DAVID USBORNE

ACCIDENTAL HEROES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

19: ALAN BENNETT, PLAYWRIGHT

ALAN BENNETT mends a puncture on his bike. "I get pleasure out of being able to do simple, practical jobs - replacing a fuse, changing a wheel, jump-starting a car - because they are not generally associated with a temperament like mine," he writes. "I tend to put sexual intercourse in this category too."

This entry from Bennett's diaries provides a clue to what the author is all about. Most of his plays, notably the *Talking Heads* television series, feature characters who are not very good at sexual intercourse - not very good at life, in fact - like Graham, a single man living with his widowed mother in *A Chip in the Sugar*, whose life is thrown into turmoil when an old flame of his mother's reappears.

The temptation is to confuse these Graham characters with Bennett himself. They tend to wear V-necked sweaters, as their author invariably does, and live their lives of quiet desperation in some suburb of Leeds, where Bennett was born in 1934 and spent his youth. But the playwright is not nearly as meek and mild as he sometimes appears.

Ever since the late Fifties, when the donnish Bennett was an unlikely member of the *Beyond the Fringe* team, he has nurtured - or at least done nothing to discourage - the public view of him as a kind of lonely (probably homosexual) librarian who became famous when he woke up one morning to find himself playing bass guitar in The Beatles. That view of Bennett took some

thing of a knock when he revealed to *The New Yorker* that he had been having an affair with a neighbour, leading to his becoming briefly, in his own words: "London's most famous heterosexual."

Bennett was thus unmasked as a man who could not only mend a puncture, but woo a woman too. He also reveals himself in his diaries as a grade A curmudgeon, far from shy when it comes to turning his biting

wit on colleagues, public figures, and especially critics.

A newspaper rings Bennett up to see whether he has any comment on the occasion of Harold Pinter's 50th birthday. "I don't," writes Bennett. "Later I realise I could have suggested two minutes' silence."

When he attends a performance of *Richard III* by the Georgian State Theatre Company, a picket hands him a leaflet, which says:

"This will tell you what life in Russia is really like."

"Actually," writes Bennett, "I should have thought *Richard III* was a pretty fair picture."

Bennett's diaries are full of rather good jokes like this. On reading *Winnie-the-Pooh* to an audience of children: "I battle against the crying of babies and the shouts of toddlers, and end up shouting myself hoarse," he writes. "It is *Winnie-the-Pooh* as read by Dr Goebbels."

What infuriates Bennett about critics is their reluctance to give him credit for the extraordinary strike rate of his jokes. When his play *Kafka's Dick* receives mixed reviews - to Bennett this is anything less than total eulogy - he notes that the reviewers neglected to mention

"that it was a funny evening". For someone who professes to hate writing - when Vaclav Havel becomes the Czech President, Bennett says how fine it must feel "just to run the state and not have to write any plays" - there is a kind of heroism in the way Bennett writes and writes: theatre, television, movies, magazine articles, diaries. His output is prodigious and invariably funny. Bennett accuses himself of merely adding to the number of words in the world.

"That's why poetry is supreme," he writes. "It makes less mess."

There is some worth in Bennett's typically melancholy view. On the other hand, there can never be too many jokes in the world, and Bennett's are some of the best.



THE WEEKLY MUSE

BY MARTIN NEWELL



In low-slung shards of reddish light
On sodden saltings, brimming dikes,
A mild December morning sprawls
And lounges in the dripping trees
While in the eastern estuaries
The whooper swans fly whirring down.
It's time for Christmas shopping now...
You sure you want to go to town?
It's mad out there, they maim and kill
To have their peace and spread goodwill.
They think that it's compulsory:
It's not. Don't go. Stay here with me.

While Safeway, Tesco and the rest,
The centres of this shopping fest,
Watch vehicles come in and out
Via traffic jams and roundabout,
In market towns which used to thrive
The men with nails and boards arrive,
Assembling where the High Street stood
Pale galleries of chip-flecked wood.

The latest news alleges that
The young are lazy and they're fat.
They drink too much and smoke as well -
Oh yes, they're ugly and they smell.
Well no, those last two bits were lies.
I'm sorry. I apologise.
Their habits at this early stage
May cause ill-health in middle age.
A matter which we should discuss,
Lest they're too ill to care for us.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot?
I'd hazard a quick guess.
Should auld acquaintance be forgot?
If your name's Bill Clinton, yes.

"Sex Appeal - it's Down to Smell":
I have a cold and I can't tell.
So women trick us constantly
By blocking our ability
To judge the way that they appear?
A pretty face, a well-turned rear,
And all the main attraction zones
Run second to their pheromones.
So if she's not the fairest lamp
That lit a bell-tent in your camp,
It's only logic to suppose
She must have led you by the nose.

Come closer. Pour yourself a port.
That cocktail dress, the one I bought,
Do try it on. Go on - fasten.
It never really suited me.
The year is knackered - I am too.
Cool Yule from Newell to all of you.

THE WEASEL

The Weasel suggests some ideal Christmas gifts, such as silver handcuffs for her, a petrol can for him and lollipops for everyone

WHOA! STEADY on there! What can you be thinking of, dashing off to the shops without taking advantage of the Weasel's annual Pick of the Prezzyes service? For months, my highly-paid team of researchers have been sifting through a mountain of publications, sorting wheat from chaff, gold from dross, and swans from geese to come up with the ne plus ultra of gift ideas. But what am I doing gabbling away? Time's a-wasting. Let's plunge in.

For the woman in your life, what could be more luxuriously pampering than *The Oldie's* suggestion of a wooden clothes-horse (£44.50)? That perennial quandary of what to buy Dad is swiftly overcome with the petrol can (£56) proposed by *Living* etc magazine. Surely no metropolitan home will be complete this Christmas without the stainless steel toothpick dispenser (£55), or the condom-shaped glass vase (£27) discovered by *Time Out*? All animal lovers will be enraptured by the fish-shaped hot-water bottle (£1.55) and two pig-face soap (£14) suggested by *The Observer* magazine. Maintaining the zoomorphic theme, the irresistible ideas of *Sainsbury's The Magazine* include silver mussels with gold-plate lining (£130 per pair), and a fluffy polar bear (£1,100).

The Backwards alarm clock (£17) proposed by *Ideal Home* should ensure every day starts with a chuckle. *Elle Decoration's* selection of gifts "to win you friends for life, not just Christmas" include "paper-thin beakers in disposable China" (£5). The only drawback is having to order them from Arnhem in the Netherlands. Tinkle, smash!

Combining practicality and economy, the sterling-silver KitKat holder (£295), advocated by the *Evening Standard* magazine, should put paid to broken-biscuit blues. Similarly, this journal feels that someone's life will not be complete without a silver Coca-Cola holder (including straw) for £650. Finally, one can only picture the gratitude of anyone fortunate enough to receive the wildly prodigal gift suggested by *The Independent*: Chupa Chups lollipops (10p each).

TALKING OF presents, the run-up to Christmas also sees the arrival of Mrs Weasel's birthday. Since this year's total is a significant number, we made our way to a specialist London shop for a suitable trinket. Despite the silver handcuffs on a velvet cushion in the window and the elaborate dog collar and lead prominently displayed within, we were not looking for exoticia intended to add spice to the doldrums of middle age.

I should explain that we were in the luxurious premises of Gucci on Old Bond Street. Costing £125, the collar and lead is indeed intended for some pampered pooch. The shop has sold all but one of its stock of dog baskets made from plaited Tuscan goat leather (£595), though there are still a number of silver doggy bowls (£125) available. As for the handcuffs, they are an ironic reference to the 20-year sentence passed last month on Patricia (the "Black Widow") Reggiani, who paid 500 million lire (almost £190,000) for the

contract killing of her ex-husband, Maurizio Gucci. "It was worth every lira to see him dead," reflected Patricia. "But he wasn't worth one lira more."

Admittedly, the sterling silver handcuffs engraved with the Gucci name are not just there for show (the company is not known for passing up commercial opportunities). You can snap up a



pair for £490. "Yes, we've sold a lot," a Gucci spokeswoman told me. But not to Mrs W, I hasten to add.

ANGELS HAVE been fluttering through your letterbox. They happen to be rather haute couture emissaries of heaven - the one on the First Class Christmas stamp boasts golden fingernails. For whatever reason, the vogue for angels is stronger than ever this year. To find out more, I popped

along to London's angelic HQ. This is not St Paul's or Westminster Abbey, but the National Gallery. According to its excellent CD-ROM catalogue, the gallery has 212 works with angels.

The very first work you see in the Sainsbury Wing, *The Assumption of the Virgin*, attributed to Francesco Botticini, is chock-a-block with feathery spirits arranged in the rigid class structure of the heavenly host. The Ministers (Principalities, Arcangels and Angels) are a bunch of po-faced jobsworths, but the middle-ranking Governors (Dominions, Virtues and Powers) are enjoying a bit of a chin-wag, while the top-notch Counsellors (Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones) are chortling away.

Fortunately, the angels in other masterpieces reject this tedious hierarchy. Sporting wings like blue flames, the blonde babes in the Wilton Diptych pose like supermodels at a photo-shoot, their arms casually interlaced or draped around each other's shoulders.

Lowering the tone a bit, a few raffish male angels also hang about the gallery. *The Archangel Michael* by Pietro Ferrigno is a spit for Rory Bremner. Having just chopped the head off Lucifer, here manifested as a snake, Piero della Francesca's *St Michael* looks like he might be in the jelled eel business. Admittedly, the swan's wings sprouting from his shoulders would not pass without remark on the Old Kent Road.

But perhaps the most truly angelic sight is to be seen immediately outside

the National Gallery, where stands the narrow cone, somewhat asymmetrical this year, of the national Christmas Tree. A touching annual gift from Norway, it is illuminated by a dancing necklace of hundreds of white bulbs. At the apex, they amalgamate into a solid point of light. No medieval theologian would have had any doubt what he was looking at.

ALONG WITH a large chunk of the populace, I've spent an unusual amount of time sniffing round the fragrance counters in the last few days - I usually avoid such spots for fear of those aftershave-squirting vampires who pounce on innocent male necks. Anyway, my eye was taken by a new scent called Odeur 53 from Commes des Garçons, which enticingly describes itself as "an abstract and perfume". Intrigued, I asked for more details. According to a press release, the "impressions" given by Odeur 53 include "styrofoam radiation", "warm blood", "transubstantiated bliss", "cytokinetic silences", "thunder of glass", "helium desires", "photocopied vapours", "liquid igloo", "rivers of aluminium", "musty cries", "desperation of forms to come", "invisibility remembered" and, in slight contradiction, "no memory". Its "ingredients" are said to include "nail polish", "ultimate fusion", "flash of metal", "mineral intensity of carbon", "cellulose smell" and, more tempting of all, "burnt rubber". It's a funny thing, but despite the best anti-efforts of C des G, their anti-scent smells quite nice.

SPIRIT OF THE AGE

PAUL VALLELY

United by a fear of darkness

A COUPLE of years ago, an enormous superstore in the Japanese city of Osaka decided to adopt a Western seasonal motif to draw in customers. On its facade it erected a five-storey high Christmas scene. At the top was a giant star of Bethlehem. Beneath were angels and then shepherds. And in the stable at the bottom was a huge Santa Claus, crucified on a cross.

It's not only the Japanese who have their wires crossed when it comes to seasonal lighting. I am not talking about this year's Oxford Street abominations, courtesy of those most festive products, Bird's Eye and Tango (fish-fingers and fizzy orange - now there's a Christmas dinner to conjure with). No, I am thinking of the various festivals of light around this time of year.

We have had Diwali, in which Hindus light small earthenware lamps filled with oil, traditionally in commemoration of the god Rama. We are well into Advent, when Christians maintain "the people who have walked in darkness" will see a great light when the Christ child is born. And today Jews will light the seventh of eight candles marking the festival of Hanukkah to mark the miracle of a single day's supply of oil burning in the temple for eight days.

There is something atavistically moral about our attitude to light and darkness. Light is wholesome, open, comprehensible; darkness is unknowable, inexplicit and dangerous. No wonder that we want to hurn candles

to pierce the darkness, particularly at this dreary time of year.

"We share pagan fears about the darkness and dress them up in our own theological garb," says Rabbi Jonathan Magonet, author of *The Explorer's Guide to Judaism*. "They go back to the sheer dread of that totally dark world in days before electric light." All the more alarming to our ancestors, then, when their great natural light seemed to diminish in the days up to the winter solstice. The Romans confidently called it *natalis solis invicti* (the birthday of the unconquered sun). But older religions believed the orb would wane indefinitely if they did not chant to bring about its rebirth - something some people still do, according to Steve Paine, a witch and spokesman for the Pagan Federation, the members of which celebrate the solstice by lighting a Yule log or - in the case of more modern pagans who do not own a hearth - by "drilling holes in a log and putting candles in it".

Martin Palmer chuckles discreetly at the thought. "Much of what we think of as pagan was invented by antiquarians in the 17th century," says Palmer, who is director of the multi-faith International Consultancy on Religion, Education and Culture. "Anyway, there's nothing quintessentially religious about partying in the dark. It's a common-sense strategy for getting through the long dismal winter. It's what the different religions add on that's interesting."

Or what has been altered or adapted in recent times. Take Diwali, which once centred around one of the great cosmic struggles between good and evil, in which the god Rama defeated the demon Ravana. "In recent years the emphasis has shifted from Rama to Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth," says Palmer. "New Year festivities have also been added, comparatively late, which have nothing to do with the light and darkness motif."

There have also been changes in Hanukkah. What was originally a minor festival, says Magonet, has grown, most particularly in Christian countries, to become a Jewish competitor to Christmas. Some kids get presents on every one of the eight days in a kind of one-upmanship and some families even call their Christmas tree a Hanukkah bush.

There has been a similar shift in the Christmas story. There was a subtle ambiguity in the package as the Church designed it. The liturgy of Advent speaks as much about preparing for the four last things - death, judgement, heaven and hell - as it does about the coming of God made flesh. Wise men bring gifts but also prompt death squads and the slaughter of the innocents. The day after Nativity is the Feast of St Stephen, the first martyr, recalling the cost of the love the child brings.

"But today our society does not tell that story," says Palmer. Increasingly we tell a sanitised version, or just the story of Santa Claus. "There is none of



Hindus receive blessings for Diwali

Kulvish Lathigra

the ambiguity of real life in the secular Christmas: you either accept it or reject it and say 'I just work over Christmas' or 'We take a cottage in Wales and ignore it all'. Something fundamental is being lost - and from all the faiths."

In part Palmer blames schools. The early response to the need for a multi-faith curriculum was to look at other religions through a Christian template - to find the Hindu or Jewish equivalent of feasts like Christmas. The attitude persists in phenomena such as Kwanza, the pseudo-African festival that American blacks have wilfully invented to replace Christmas (the "traditional" dish: Liberation Salad, with lettuce to symbolise the green of hope, olives for the black of African-American skin and tomatoes for the blood

shed in the struggle for equal rights). "What kids everywhere quickly worked out," says Palmer, "was that they could use all these festivals to extract more presents from their parents. Then it became consumerism that drove the changes. So despite their different origins the festivals have received identical packaging - and there's not much that can be done because it has all become a vital element in our national economic life."

Even the pagans have acquiesced. "Our main celebration is Yule," says the witch, Steve Paine, "but we still give our children their big presents on Christmas Day. It's hard not to take part, though we only do it because of the children." Even paganism, it seems, is not what it was. Happy holidays!

DAYS LIKE THESE

25 DECEMBER 1942

JOAN WYNNDHAM
(pictured), a young WAAF,
writes in her journal:

"My first Christmas in Scotland. I had behaved so well for the last few months, and everyone here thought I was such a nice, quiet intellectual little girl - but not any more! We were up at the men's Mess, and it was fantastic - colossal buffet, unlimited booze. I can't remember when I got so drunk or felt so exhilarated, except possibly when I went out with my dad. I have an awful feeling I called the CO a stinker - it was one of those religious arguments about whether the popes had mistresses."

A very nice pongo drove me home and wanted to kiss me but I said No, and he said, God, what a swine I am trying to take advantage of a girl when she's tight! - unobtainable up here - some ginger nuts, some Persian oil, and a beautiful silk kimono. The girls tell me I look like the personification of sin in it."



25 DECEMBER 1913

RAYMOND ASQUITH,
son of the prime
minister, writes to
Lady Diana Manners:

"I must apologise for sending you Aubrey Beardsley's drawings but I do so want to lead you back from your tainted and artificial ideals for a simpler saner more childlike outlook upon life. Anyhow they will do for Bonar Law's bedroom next time he stays with you. Here we have to knock along as best we may without the faintest element of corruption - not a hint of decay, not a breath of Bakst; on the contrary, Christmas cards, Morris dances,

children's prattle, woolwork, goodwill and so forth - all that was ever joyous and clear and fresh."

25 DECEMBER 1911

WILLIAM LASHLY,
engineer on Scott's last
Antarctic expedition,
records in his diary:

"Christmas Day and a good one. We have done 15 miles over a very changing surface. First of all it was very crevassed and pretty rotten; we were often in difficulties as to which way we should tackle it. I had the misfortune to drop clean through, but was stopped with a jerk when at the end of my harness. It was not of course a very nice sensation, especially on Christmas Day and being my birthday as well. Anyhow Mr Evans, Bowers and Crean wished me many happy returns of the day. I thanked him politely and the others laughed, but were pleased I was not hurt bar a bit of a shake."

IAN IRVINE

The morality of dropping bombs

CLASSIC
PODIUM

From a speech in the House of Lords by the Bishop of Chichester, George Bell, on the British bombing of German cities during the Second World War (9 FEBRUARY 1944)

DO THE Government understand the full force of what area bombardment is doing and is destroying now? Are they alive not only to the vastness of the material damage, much of which is irreparable, but also to the harvest they are laying up for the future relationships of the peoples of Europe, as well as to its moral implications?

I recognise the legitimacy of concentrated attack on industrial and military objectives, on airfields and air bases. I fully realise that in attacks on centres of war industry and transport, the killing of civilians, when it is the result of bona fide military activity, is inevitable. But there must be a fair balance between the means employed and the purpose achieved. To obliterate a whole town because certain portions contain military and industrial establishments is to reject the balance.

Let me take two crucial instances, Hamburg and Berlin. Hamburg contains targets of immense military and industrial importance. It also happens to be the most democratic town in Germany, where the anti-Nazi opposition was strongest. Injuries to civilians resulting from bona fide attacks on particular objectives are legitimate according to International Law. But owing to the methods used, the whole town is now a ruin. Unutterable destruction and devastation

were wrought last autumn. On a very conservative estimate, 28,000 persons were killed.

Never before in the history of air warfare was an attack of such weight and persistence carried out against a single industrial concentration. Practically all the buildings, cultural, military, residential, industrial, religious - including the famous Uni-

versity Library with its 800,000 volumes, of which three-quarters have perished - were razed to the ground.

Berlin is four times the size of Hamburg. The offices of the government, the military, industrial, war-making establishments in Berlin are a fair target. Injuries to civilians are inevitable. But, to date, half Berlin has been destroyed, the residential and the industrial portions alike.

Through the dropping of thousands of tons of bombs of extraordinary power, men and women have been lost, overwhelmed in the colossal tornado of smoke, blast and flame. It is said that 74,000 persons have been killed, and that 3 million are already homeless. The policy is obliteration, openly acknowledged. That is not a justifiable act of war.

Berlin is one of the greatest centres of art collections in the world. It has a large collection of Oriental and classical sculpture. It has one of the best picture galleries in Europe, comparable to the National Gallery. It has a gallery of modern art better than the Tate, a museum of ethnology without parallel in this country. One of the highest and best organised libraries - state and university, containing two and a half million books - in the world. It is not possible so quickly to rebuild libraries or galleries. It is not very easy to rehouse those works of art which have been spared. Those works

of art and those libraries will be wanted for the re-education of the Germans after the war.

Why is there this inability to reckon with the moral and spiritual facts of war? Why is there this forgetfulness of the ideals by which our cause is inspired? How can the War Cabinet fail to see that this progressive devastation of cities is threatening the roots of civilisation?

How can they be blind to the harvest of even fiercer warring and destruction to which the present destruction will inevitably lead when the members of the War Cabinet have long passed to their rest?

The sufferings of Europe, brought about by the demonic cruelty of Hitler and his Nazis, and hardly imaginable to those in this country who for the last five years have not been out of this island or had intimate association with Hitler's victims, are not to be healed by the use of power only. What we do in war - which, after all, lasts a comparatively short time - affects the whole character of peace, which covers a much longer period.

It is of supreme importance that we who are the liberators of Europe should so use power that it is always under the control of law. For because the chief name inscribed on our banner is "Law", the Allies stand for something greater than power.

THE SATURDAY ESSAY

Our ancient fascination with the sky at night

TWO THOUSAND years after it was first seen by the Wise Men, astronomers are still arguing about the Star of Bethlehem. They suggest many explanations for this herald of the birth of Christ: a comet, the birth or death of a star, a conjunction of planets, an apparent hesitation in a planetary orbit, or even the sighting of the then-unknown planet Uranus.

One little-known fact is that the star was probably not the brilliant object portrayed on Christmas cards; it appears that King Herod and all his "chief priests and scribes" missed it. St Matthew did not use the adjective "bright" to describe it in his Gospel. Only in the early, less reliable, Christian literature does the star dazzle.

Heavenly objects did not have to be brilliant for the Wise Men to find them fascinating. The Magi attached a significance to cosmic events and structures that is quite alien to the thinking of their modern counterparts. Their perspective is highlighted by the translation of the Greek word "magi". The Authorised Version reads this as "wise men" but the New English Bible opts for "astrologers". Like good anthropologists, we must try to see the heavens through ancient eyes and minds to understand why this star was so significant in the Magi's Babylonian society.

The Star makes one of its rare biblical appearances in the Gospel according to St Matthew 2:1-12, which states that: "In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?' For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." Some theologians dismiss this reference to the star as a story made up to satisfy the Old Testament prophecy that "A star shall come forth out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel". Fulfillment of such a prediction would have provided succour for the faith.

Matthew's Gospel is full of references to the Old Testament, yet there is no such "fulfilment statement" regarding the star. If we conclude, then, that this heavenly apparition was real, rather than something cooked up to satisfy an Old Testament prediction, what did the Wise Men see?

Interpreting the meagre star evidence is tricky. When it comes to astronomy two millennia ago, there was no physical perspective and no astrophysics; the idea that planets differed from stars had not occurred to people. Instead, they were concerned with the relative position and motion of these points of light. Identifying the star would also be easier if we knew when Jesus was born. Then we could use a computer program to extrapolate from what we can see of the heavens today to what the Wise Men saw of them on that historic night. However, we don't have a precise date for Christ's birth.

Clinging on the assumption that the period in which the birth of Jesus took place is known - between 4BC and 7BC, some time around September or March - we can draw up a shortlist of candidates for the Bethlehem star. As long ago as AD248, Origen (Origenes Adamantius), the celebrated Christian writer, teacher and theologian, suggested that the Bethlehem star was a comet. Perhaps it was the "broom star" (*sui-hsing*) - so called because the comet's tail appeared to be sweeping the sky - that was described in 5BC by Chinese astronomers and recorded in the official history of the Han dynasty.

The Magi had the knowledge and cultural influences that would motivate them to chase the comet. In classical literature, the Magi are depicted as a religious group skilled in the observation of the heavens. From the fourth century BC, Babylon was the centre of astronomy in the known world and the Magi were important members of the Babylonian royal court in Mesopotamia. Moreover, Babylon had contained a thriving Jewish colony since the time of the Exile in the 13th century BC, so that the Jewish prophecies of a saviour king, the Messiah, may have been well known to the Magi.

Why did the Wise Men follow the star? Comets were then associated with great rulers, and the Magi were known to have visited kings in other countries. Not everyone agrees. Critics point out that Henry, the second-century astronomer/astrologer from Alexandria, associated comets with misfortune.



ROGER HIGHFIELD
Heavenly objects do not have to be spectacularly brilliant for Wise Men to find them intriguing

How did the comet direct the Magi to Bethlehem? Given the model of the heavens that then prevailed, comets would have been regarded by the Magi as being below the "heavenly spheres" containing the stars, planets, and so on. Colin Humphreys, of Cambridge University, explains how the Magi might have thought of the comet as hanging over a given spot, particularly if it was low in the sky and its tail was oriented vertically. This interpretation vividly fits Matthew's account: "Lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was."

There has, however, been some debate over whether the Chinese records imply movement typical of a comet. Some British astronomers have suggested that the Chinese mistakenly categorised the object as a broom star when it was in fact a "guest star", the thermonuclear flash of a nova, from the Latin *nova stella*, or "new star". This theory dates back a long way, perhaps even to a hint in *De Vero Anno*, written in 1614 by the great astronomer Johann Kepler. A few such novae appear each year, when a faint, usually unseen, star brightens by a factor of 10,000 or even 1,000,000. These outbursts are thought to occur in a binary, a pair of stars, when gases from the larger member fall into the smaller member, triggering a nuclear conflagration.

However, the same reasons that make the comet an attractive candidate for the Bethlehem star tend to disqualify the nova. Matthew 1:9 suggests that the object was later visible in the south, and a nova would not have moved that much. The location is also an unlikely one for a nova, given that the Bethlehem star appeared well away from the disc-like plane of our galaxy, which is hush with stars - its hazy cross-section is seen in the sky as the Milky Way - and likelier to be a stellar nursery.

But the objective perspective of a modern astronomer may be an inadequate one from which to hunt for the Bethlehem star. We need to understand how the Wise Men were and how they interpreted signs in the heavens. Astrology was widely practised throughout the Roman world, especially in that part of the Near East that included Judaea, and the Magi, with their detailed knowledge of the night skies, would have been unlikely to have been impressed by a routine event such as the appearance of a shooting star. They might, however, have been moved by something in the night skies that would seem unremarkable to a modern astronomer. This is best understood by looking back at the common origin of astronomy and astrology.

Before the 17th century, there was not the sharp dichotomy that we see today between astrologers (who always spout ambiguous rubbish) and astronomers (who sometimes do). At the root of both disciplines is our ancient fascination with the night sky. A holy man's knowledge of the heavens conferred an ability to foretell the future, guiding him through the seasons, showing when to harvest and when to move herds. It also helped him to predict ootable events such as a solar eclipse or the flooding of rivers such as the Nile. In this restricted sense, knowledge of the heavens illuminates our destiny. This, however, is a far cry from the astrologer's supposed art of judging the occult influence of the stars on human affairs.

Woe betide anyone who confuses astronomy and astrology today. But when the Wise Men gazed at the heavens, they glimpsed something of their destiny. Once



Astronomers are still arguing over what precisely it was that the Three Kings followed

we accept that the Magi had an astronomer's interest in the details of the night sky, spiced with the astrologer's fascination for what these details might say about human affairs, it becomes apparent they may not have seen a star at all, or indeed a cut-and-dried astronomical object, but an unremarkable cosmic event with remarkable symbolism.

This fascination with cosmic symbols underlines one clear difference between the Magi and the chief priests: astrology was practised in Babylonian society, whereas it was forbidden in Jewish society, according to Deuteronomy 4:19 ("lest three corrupt themselves... lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them"). That Herod was unaware of the star until the Magi informed him of its significance adds weight to this argument.

If we accept that many Bethlehem-star suggestions do not take into account the mindset of the Wise Men, what kind of astrology was practised in the Near East during the reign of King Herod? Michael Molnar from Rutgers University in Piscataway, New Jersey, has studied Greek astrology as used throughout the Roman world, including Mesopotamia and Babylonia, and drawn his own conclusions: "By my theory, Jesus would have been 2,000 years old on 17 April 1995". His candidate for the Star of Bethlehem is an event that took place on 17 April 6BC: a double occultation of Jupiter by the Moon, when our closest neighbour moves in front of the giant planet. Molnar's studies have suggested that this event, though of little significance to a modern astronomer, was "brilliant" in an astrological sense.

Michael Molnar notes that astrological

signs appeared on ancient coinage, notably from Antioch, the capital of the Roman province of Syria. On one side of each coin was a bust of Jupiter. On the other, Aries the Ram gazed back at a star. Molnar now believes that the coins commemorate the annexation of Judaea by the Romans, which suggests that the Romans were aware of important astrological portents involving Judaea. He considers it likely that what he calls "the great portent" of 17 April 6BC was very much on their minds - the Romans were looking for proof that a Roman, not a Jew, had fulfilled the messianic prophecy. Aries appeared on the coins because it was linked to Judaea in contemporary symbolism: Ptolemy mentions that Judaea is under the spell of Aries.

Molnar's argument needed another ingredient - the presence of a heavenly body to symbolise the birth of a king: "My initial search for a regal 'star' centred on the star of Zeus, namely the Planet Jupiter, which invariably played the central role in horoscopes that had regal implications". To identify an astrological portent involving Jupiter, he focused on lunar occultations. These are "hull's-eye" conjunctions in which the Moon's disc obscures the planet. Examining the likely time frame, Molnar found only two that took place in Aries and thus in Judaea, occurring on 20 March 6BC and 17 April 6BC: "During the second occultation, Jupiter was precisely 'in the east', an astrological terminology that Matthew uses to describe the Magi's star". The heavens on 17 April 6BC produced impressive astrological portents: "If we recreate a horoscopic chart for [this date]," writes Molnar, "we find unmistakable indications pointing to the birth of a king of Judaea. I believe that a horoscope of that day was incredibly ominous - truly messianic".

The mystery of the Star has been

solved. Perhaps not. David Hughes of Sheffield University, for one, believes that such occultations took place too regularly to be of great astrological significance. He is struck by the rival idea of a triple conjunction and argues that the Bethlehem triple conjunction was Jupiter, Saturn and the constellation of Pisces. The regal aspect came from Jupiter, while Saturn stood for both the principle of justice and the land of Palestine. Pisces was the sign of the zodiac that represented the land of Israel. This conjunction, claims Hughes, signified a potent brew of divinity, kingship and righteousness involving the Jewish people and the Promised Land: "Putting it crudely, that is why the Wise Men went for Jerusalem."

The Magi could have figured out the details of the triple conjunction well in advance. They could have watched the first conjunction from Babylon in May of 7BC, but delayed travelling until the end of the long, hot summer. On their way to Jerusalem, they could have witnessed the astrologically important moment when Jupiter and Saturn were rising at the instant of sunset.

As interpreted by David Hughes, the passage rendered in most translations of the Bible as "We have seen his star in the east" has a more specific meaning, namely "We have seen his star rising in the east as the Sun was setting". If this explanation is correct, the only thing that is miraculous is that the Magi noticed the "star" and made the arduous trek to witness, as they said, the appearance of a new king for the Jews. This suggests the real Christmas should be celebrated some time around the month of September, to reflect the events that took place in 7BC. However, given the patchy evidence, the Star of Bethlehem debate will no doubt continue.

BAROMETER

SEAN O'GRADY

Turkey of the week

Meet Trudi the turkey and her owner, Ollie Baker, a farmer. Mr Baker hand-reared the lovely Trudi as a pet. But this turkey voted for Christmas when she escaped from her own safe quarters to join Mr Baker's 1,200 (identical) birds that were, sadly, never going to see another glad, confident Boxing Day morning.



Mr Baker was distraught, the stuffing knocked out of him. But, if you knew Trudi like he knew Trudi... Or, in his words: "Usually the birds are all asleep inside their huts but this time, as I got into the run, one turkey came towards me. I could tell immediately it was Trudi because of the way she walks. She seems to waddle a bit more than the others. I knew for sure it was her."

Law lord of the week

Another turkey, Leonard Hoffmann is the judge who let Pinochet off the hook by neglecting to declare his interest in human rights. But "Leg-over Lennie" has not, in the past, bothered to conceal his passionate concern for the human rights of Stringfellows babes, among others. The Lord Justice of Sex Appeal stopped going to the night spot a few years ago. Do all women find these guys, with their sharp legal minds, full-bottomed wigs and substantial earnings irresistible?



Mini of the week

The Austin Mini - the greatest car ever - celebrates its 40th birthday in 1999. This is Natalie Curtis's festively decorated 1993 job, known, perhaps a little predictably, as Rudolph. He has a red nose, £200-worth of holly, crackers, mistletoe, snowflakes a toy reindeer and a trailer for presents. And (unlike certain small Mercedes) he's sure to pass the "elk test".

Pants of the week

Russian scientists (haven't they got anything better to do?) are developing a cocktail of bacteria to digest the cotton and paper underpants worn by astronauts. Besides saving space in space and removing a potential health risk, the methane produced could be used to power the spacecraft. There should be a fully working version ready by 2017. Intergalactic transport will never be the same again. Eat my shorts, Spock.

Image of the week

Phon Hague and... surely that can't be the Leader of the Opposition, fresh from another makeover? Wisely, William stayed away from this photo-opportunity, although the shape of the wabbit's head does have a familiar look to it.



Brookside creator Redmond

DEATH TO the boring middle classes! Write them out of existence - or at least out of Brookside Close. Well, that's what Phil Redmond ordered this week. The jovial television producer talks of his fiendish characters as though they were best friends; he also has a penchant for gritty realism, and brings both them and it into our homes with productions such as *Brookside*, *Hollyoaks* and *Grange Hill*. Not for him the comfortable life of Albert Square where just about the worst thing that can happen is Babs Windsor fluttering her eyelashes at you; Redmond prefers bodies under patios, incest, drugs and contract killing. No wonder my mother would never let me watch *Grange Hill*.

Why do you think the middle classes are boring? That is a typical soundbite quote. I was trying to correct the view that I was about to take Brookside more middle-class, following on from Blair's notion that we're all middle-class now, so we need to make all our soap operas middle-class. It just wasn't true.

Why leave the middle class out? Soap needs at its core working-class characters, because most of the population can still be defined in those terms. As a storyteller, I think there's a lot to be said about the needs and the problems of the working class. And it's where I come from.

But when I last saw 'Hollyoaks', it was teeming with middle-class families. If you stand back and look at the characters, I would argue that they are not middle-class. They are just slightly more middle-class than normally seen portrayed on television. Aren't you perpetuating a 'scally' stereotype with some of your working-class characters?

COLD CALL

SALLY CHATTERTON RINGS
PHIL REDMOND

One of the most frustrating things that you discover as a contemporary dramatist is that life really is made up of stereotypes and clichés. They're true because they do exist.

Do you think that soap has a specific function? There are so many bogus theories on this. But it falls on what you want to do as a writer. I am interested in looking at issues. If you can engage

an audience in a programme, you can then engage them in the debates that are going on in society. The more challenging you make that debate, the more enjoyable they find the programme.

Not just a cynical play to up the ratings, then? Well, we do do cynical plays: the explosion in Brookside, drugs in Grange Hill, a plane crash in *Emmerdale*. That's part of the skill.

It is a cynical play, then? No. It's part of the crack. The fabric of society is the mundane. People want to see a relevancy, to touch it and realise that someone else is experiencing what they've exper-

enced. But not all the time. They also want a bit of spice.

Cnn soap operas educate? It's education with a small "e". But that's not the vocation. We're there to entertain. We've turned the Reithian thing around from "educate, inform and entertain" to "entertain, inform and educate". I've learnt that if you're not talking about an issue that the public is engaged in, then they will ignore it.

Soaps, then, will encourage debate rather than dull the brain? It helps create a more sympathetic climate for the real campaigners. That's the greatest claim I'll make and that gives the greatest buzz.

Indulging in seasonal shenanigans at the annual office Christmas party can result in something far worse than a hangover. By Meg Carter

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Why can't family life be more like football?

EACH YEAR, one or two sporting moments lodge themselves in the folk memory, and this year's brace happened within 20 minutes of each other, when England played Argentina in the World Cup. I may have forgiven David Beckham for his lapse that day. Certainly, I am able once more to marvel at his skill with free kicks, and I can even bring myself to feel slightly sorry that he and Posh can't go out for a quiet drink like any other young couple.

But who can have forgotten the characteristic outburst of petulance that makes him the fall-guy of a perfect modern cautionary tale? For me, Beckham is like one of the mythological heroes of the ancient world combined with The Boy Who Played With Matches (and ended up burnt to

a cinder), as told to me by my mother when I was a small boy.

This week I pressed this cautionary tale into action when my own sometimes petulant seven-year-old, Darcy, came home from school seething with indignation that he had been given a detention: all he and his friend had done, he told us, was to step in and prevent a third boy from being pushed around after football in the playground.

"I didn't start it, and it wasn't my fault," he insisted. In fact, as Darcy made pretty clear, his behaviour had been little short of heroic, and he rubbed it in by ostentatiously writing a Christmas card to his co-accused in which he pledged to carry on "protecting" their friend.

His PR campaign worked

well enough to send me in to discuss the matter with his teacher. An experienced reader of junior spin-doctoring, she left me in little doubt that, far from being some awful mistake, Darcy's detention was richly deserved as the culmination of a term's worth of niggling infractions.

This left me in a quandary: how was I to explain to Darcy that while I applauded his anti-bullying sentiment, I also supported his teacher's disciplinary action?

So I told the tale of David Beckham, The Boy Who Lost the World Cup. "Remember when England played Argentina in France '98?" I asked Darcy. He cast his mind back across the dim mists of time to last summer. "Remember when Michael Owen scored that

PARK LIFE



BRUCE MILLAR

amazing goal, but Beckham got himself sent off and so England lost?" Yes, he remembered it, but so what? "Well, Beckham was the one who was fouled, so he didn't start it, and the

Argentine player wasn't punished at all," I explained. "But it was Beckham who kicked out and got himself sent off, which meant England were out of the World Cup. He often behaves like that and gets away with it, but this time he was punished. Now you could say it was unfair on Beckham - and it was," I suggested. "But everyone still blames him because it was silly to react in the way he did."

It occurred to me at this point that the referee has the enormous advantage of meting out justice on a summary basis. It may be uneven, even random at times, but it is dispensed on the spot and there is little point in taking issue with it - indeed, it is against the rules even for adult players to argue with the referee.

Few sensible people would advocate a return to the barbarities of corporal punishment, but the quasi-judicial disciplinary codes that have replaced it, with their various grades of offence leading up to detention during or after school, have lost that instant link between crime and retribution. The whole lengthy process breeds a legalistic culture in which arguing back is not only the norm, it becomes a sacred right. Teachers become judges and children barrack-room lawyers, with parents wheeled in for special occasions like cut-rate QCs. And, as any parent will tell you, the endless argument over why a certain infringement was wrong is often just as wearing as the offence itself.

All of which leaves the

referee on the sports field, with his whistle and colour-coded cards, as the last exponent of summary justice in our world. Semi-judicial committees may impose or lengthen bans on any player who infringes, but they can't overturn a sending off as yet - the referee still wields absolute power in his domain.

Recognising this, I once bought a set of yellow and red cards from my local sports shop as an aid to discipline at one of the boys' birthday parties. Naturally, it didn't work. Guests goaded me and thumped each other under my very nose in the quest of cards: each one wanted to be the first to score red. People moan about the hardship of being a referee these days - but it's much harder being a teacher or a dad.

The grown-up kid who gets paid to play Lego all day

MY WEEK

FIVE DAYS IN THE LIFE OF MARK CAMPBELL, 34, A LEGO DEMONSTRATOR AT HAMLEYS IN LONDON. THIS WEEK, OVER 80,000 CUSTOMERS VISIT EVERY DAY. MARK, A DESIGN GRADUATE, HAS WORKED THERE FOR SEVEN YEARS. HE LIVES IN FOREST HILL, SOUTH LONDON, WITH HIS WIFE MONIQUE

Sunday

People say I've got Peter Pan syndrome - that I'm a boy who can't grow up. But this truly is the best job in the world. I get paid to play with toys all day. What could be better? I wasn't even on the rota today, but I popped in to say hello and help out with some new Lego Mindstorm games which we've got in. I only meant to stay an hour, but as soon as I walked onto the shop floor I was mobbed. People realise you're a demonstrator and suddenly we're surrounded by customers with their questions.

I did some last-minute Christmas shopping in the afternoon, and went back home to put my feet up.

Monday

The day started just like it always does with a coffee at Charing Cross Station. The guy at the counter knows exactly how I like it - vanilla and sugar - and it sets me up for the morning until the tea break at 11.30. Today was mayhem. Some days you understand what it must be like to work in MacDonald's: it's nine hours of constant noise, kids, panic-monium. I have this trick to keep me calm - I force myself to smile for 10 seconds, even if I'm feeling miserable or stressed. Those 10 seconds usually give me just enough time to mellow out again.

A sweet Oriental woman came in wanting to exchange some toys. She just kept saying "I no want", over and over again. It turned out the goods weren't even from Hamleys, they were from Harrods. I was shouting "Harrods" at her. She was shouting "Hamleys" at me. "You go Knightsbridge," I said. It went on for ages, but in the end we sorted it. Loads of the customers don't speak English. You get very good at miming what you're trying to say.

People ask the most daft questions. "Where's the fourth floor?" was today's classic.

Tuesday

I came in early at 8.30am to tidy up the floor after the hysteria from the day before. During the night, people come in to re-stock the shelves, but there's usually stuff that needs to be tidied up. You'd be amazed at the mess people leave. They'll tear open a box, have a look at the toy and if they decide they don't want it, just leave it lying around.

I spent the rest of the day showing people how all the new Lego games work. I used to work in the skate department - my job was to skate around the store all day. When they put me on to Lego, I wasn't sure what I was in for. I thought Lego was just boring red and white bricks. But

nowadays you can get amazing things - interactive Lego: Lego which links up to your computer. The next big thing is going to be Star Wars Lego to tie in with the prequel next year. We've already had people ringing up about it.

Anyway, today I was on my hands and knees showing people how all the stuff works. A seven-year-old kid came up to me and said, "I can do it better than you", which was a bit humiliating. We also had this Dutch guy who bought eight Lego Mindstorms for his staff. At £160 each, it was the best sale of the day.

Loads of men in their thirties come in and ask about the Lego. I've even served men who look like 50-year-old bankers in suits. Sometimes, they pretend that their kids are the ones who are interested, but you can tell by the look on their faces that it's really them.

I went to see a heavy metal band called Rob Zombie in the evening. They were playing at the Astoria club and they were great. You can't turn up to a gig like that in your Lego T-shirt, so I got changed at work into "normal" clothes and went straight from the store.

Wednesday

Today was Furby day. We got a delivery, and by the time I was in at 8.30am there were already dozens



Mark Campbell demonstrates an 'intelligent' Lego toy to young John Yates

Mark Childers

of people queuing up outside. Some of them had actually stood out there all night.

We'd tried to keep everyone calm by handing out tickets, and explaining that customers were only allowed one Furby each, but when it came to it there was just over-the-top insanity wherever you looked. People running into the shop shouting "I need a Furby!" I was even offered money by one bloke who arrived after we'd sold out.

It amazes me how passionate

people get. You'd think the world has gone mad. But, on the other hand, these people just want to buy their children exactly what they want. It's Christmas, and nothing else matters.

By the end of the day, my feet really ached. You're supposed to wear smart polished shoes but sometimes I'll wear Doc Martens instead. When you're standing up all day, your feet feel like murder by the time you get home. I was exhausted when I got in, so I watched an Eddie Izzard video on my new wide

screen television. I'll always watch comedy if I'm feeling stressed out. It usually does the trick, and I'm in a good mood again.

Thursday

We started getting calls for F117 fighter plans today, and B52 bombers. It took a few seconds to catch on to why, but kids had seen stuff on television about bombing in Iraq and suddenly they get it into their heads that they want to act out what's been happening.

It's been really busy over the last few days on the Lego floor. Last week we took £46,000 in the Lego department alone, and it looks like we'll match that this week too.

In the evening, Monique and I went to see Boy George and Culture Club. I was a bit embarrassed to admit to people that I was going - "It was my wife's idea," I kept saying. But I was amazed. I had a really great time.

INTERVIEW BY LOUISE FRANCE

How Dick Barton invented the soap star

Post-war Britain was addicted to 'Dick Barton, Special Agent' but it all ended in tears in a row over pay. John Crace met the actor who walked out



Noel Johnson resigned from 'Dick Barton' over money

Huw Evans

I'VE COME to a small village outside Cardiff to visit Noel Johnson. "Did you know he was Dick Barton?" says a friendly septuagenarian whom I stop to ask for directions. Er, yes I did actually. In fact, that's why I'm here. Even though he has spent a lifetime in theatre and television, he is still best known for the title role in Britain's first soap sensation, the radio series *Dick Barton, Special Agent* more than 50 years ago.

If Johnson is annoyed by this, he doesn't show it, and launches into his well-rehearsed Dick Barton patter. How he was delighted at the thought of a regular income - even if it was only £18 a week. How they all used to laugh out loud at the absurdity of some of the scripts. Yet there is no Dick Barton memorabilia on view in his flat. There are photos of him in various stage productions

and umpteen biogs of the theatre's great and good, but if Barton's in there, he's in deep cover. This is partly modesty - at 82 years old, Johnson's got better things to do than create a shrine to himself - but it may also reflect a lingering ambivalence about Dick Barton. These days, actors are happy to become identified as a fictional character in a long-running soap, as it guarantees them a life of C-list celebrity stardom. But Johnson was the first person to whom this happened. He became famous simply because of the character he played. To the public he was Dick Barton. This made him uncomfortable, primarily because his acting talents went unrecognised, but also because of the prevailing snobishness within the profession.

"I was aware that Val Gielgud (BBC's head of drama and brother of the more famous

John) always hated the show for being so downmarket."

Johnson had been a well-established actor for more than 10 years before he was offered the part of Barton by the producer Martyn Webster.

"Once I had made sure I could still do other work, I eagerly accepted," he says. "Even though the money was poor, it was still regular work."

First broadcast on 7 October 1946 within months, millions of listeners were tuning in. Dick Barton became a phenomenon. It was anticipated that the show would attract an exclusively adult audience, but it rapidly became essential listening for a generation of children. Good news for the ratings was bad news for Johnson.

"Barton was a proper character at first," he says. "He drank, he smoked and had a girlfriend. As soon as the producers cottoned on to the

fact we had a youth audience, they felt they had to become moral guardians."

Out went all the interesting vices. Despite feeling Barton had been emasculated, Johnson was never less than professional, week-in, week-out for two and a half years, he did just that. But if the public was lapping it up, Johnson was less than enthusiastic. His voice had become so familiar that he had become type-cast and many producers wouldn't touch him: the well-paid commercial spinoffs were artistically unsatisfying, worst of all, he felt that the BBC didn't want to dilute its best asset and was preventing him from getting other work without offering any compensation. So Johnson did the unthinkable. He left.

"I went straight into a West End play," he said. "Needless to say it flopped." The BBC, meanwhile, tried

to make him change his mind. "They asked me to name my price. I said: '£100 per week.' They said: 'It sounds like you want danger money.' That's precisely what I want," I replied. And that was the end of it."

Johnson went on to make many theatre and TV appearances, most recently in *A Dance to the Music of Time* and *A Touch of Frost*.

But nothing he has done has brought him anything approaching the recognition of Dick Barton. So does Britain's first soap star, who made next to nothing out of it, feel when he sees *EastEnders* actors making a small fortune? "I've never watched *EastEnders*," he replies. Noel Johnson always was one of the old school.

A stage version of 'Dick Barton, Special Agent' is on at the Warehouse Theatre, Croydon (0181-680 4060)

Professor Paul L. Hancock

PAUL L. HANCOCK was a geologist who latterly added the analysis of classical ruins to the repertoire of stratigraphic he amassed during a hustling life in order to trace the fracture and hunking of the Earth's crust.

He was mindful of the danger of reading too much into toppled columns and cracked architraves, but did not therefore dismiss archaeological evidence as ambiguous nor cite it merely for decoration. Instead he characteristically embarked, not many months ago, on a programme of research with colleagues in civil engineering and computer science to determine the kind of damage which was unambiguously seismic. A blunt, undiscriminating weapon would thereby become a sensitive and revealing probe with which to extend the lamentably short instrumental and documentary earthquake record, and thus make possible the assessment of seismic risk in locations where major earthquakes are spaced millennia apart.

A search for ever greater refinement marked the studies of more conventional structural geology that occupied the bulk of Hancock's career, starting with a PhD thesis entitled "A Structural Analysis of the Orleton Anticline, Pembrokeshire", through the many publications and lectures that were to follow, but always set against the grander regional setting: in the Alps, the Pyrenees, Arabia, the Aegean, Taiwan and the United States, as well as in Scotland, Wales and the West Country.

Hancock was born in 1937, in London. Educated at Sheen Grammar School and at Durham University, he was awarded a first class degree in geology. He gained his PhD in 1963. Following two years as DSIR (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research) Research Fellow in Cambridge he was appointed assistant lecturer in geology at Nottingham College of Technology and as lecturer in geology at Strathclyde and (in 1967) at Bristol, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Mindful of the danger of reading too much into toppled columns, he embarked on research to decide what damage was unambiguously seismic



Hancock was awarded the Lyell Fund of the Geological Society of London in 1978. He was promoted to Reader in 1981 and was elected to a personal Chair in 1985.

Hancock's own view of his scientific progress emphasised an early interest in brittle rock deformation when its study was not yet fashion-

able, and his later switch from ancient structures to those currently deforming during earthquakes, which took him to an area where his studies were to become classics - the Aegean. And it was here that the research into historical earthquakes gained chronological precision from his fascination with

travertine, the spring-laid calcareous deposits which sometimes permit the extent and age of later faults to be established.

A further development, which fruitfully fused his experience of rock fracturing and active deformation, was to use such fractures as clues to the pattern of stresses that prevails in a specified area. This work was of evident importance not just to seismologists but also to geologists engaged in evaluating petroleum reservoirs.

Hancock combined great dignity with affability, and dedication to his work with a generosity of spirit which doubtless helped him endure, and perhaps even enjoy, the countless international commissions, editorial boards and committees on which he selflessly sat.

He was an invited or keynote speaker at a dozen scientific conferences and gave papers at some 40 others. He attended a similar number of research colloquia round the world. He edited and rewrote countless manuscripts so that

the ideas of others could blossom and be heard.

One might wish he had done less for his subject in this tangential way so that he could have profited it more lastingly by setting down his ideas in greater detail. But his own assessment reveals that to damn conferences and commissions as the enemies of academic promise is a mean and short-sighted perspective; Hancock proudly listed in his CV some of the devices by which he had promoted international scientific collaboration and exchange, his contribution to an annual Erasmus advanced school in Italy, and his successful collaboration with archaeological colleagues at Bristol. Indeed, he lists yet more chores and responsibilities among his honours and rewards.

A fine teacher, Hancock filled visiting professorships at Al Ain, Bahia Blanca, Istanbul, Florence, Alberta and Reno. A lasting monument to his industry is the *Journal of Structural Geology*, which he founded in 1978. (Not content with this, he later co-founded *Annales Tectoni-*

ca, an English-language journal devoted to the countries bordering the Mediterranean.) There are also eight books which he co-edited and two, including *Continental Deformation* (1994), which he edited solo. His 59 research articles include important studies of strain analysis, earthquake prediction, the North Anatolian fault, and travertine at Pamukkale in Turkey. The proceedings of a conference on Volcanoes, Earthquakes and Archaeology that he helped to convene in 1997 are in the press. His ideas will be developed by the research students from the UK and Turkey, Arabia, Greece, Spain and Lebanon who were to become Hancock's collaborators and champions.

CLAUDIO VITA-FINZI

Paul Lewis Hancock, geologist: born London 26 March 1937; Lecturer in Geology, Bristol University 1967-81; Reader 1981-95; Professor of Neotectonics, 1995-98; twice married (one son, one daughter); died Bristol 9 December 1998.

Adrian Ryan

ADRIAN RYAN was the most unassuming of painters. He enjoyed the friendship and respect of many better-known artists - among them John Minton, Francis Bacon, Peter Lanyon and Patrick Heron - but he never sought worldly success, and so was not accorded the recognition he undoubtedly deserved.

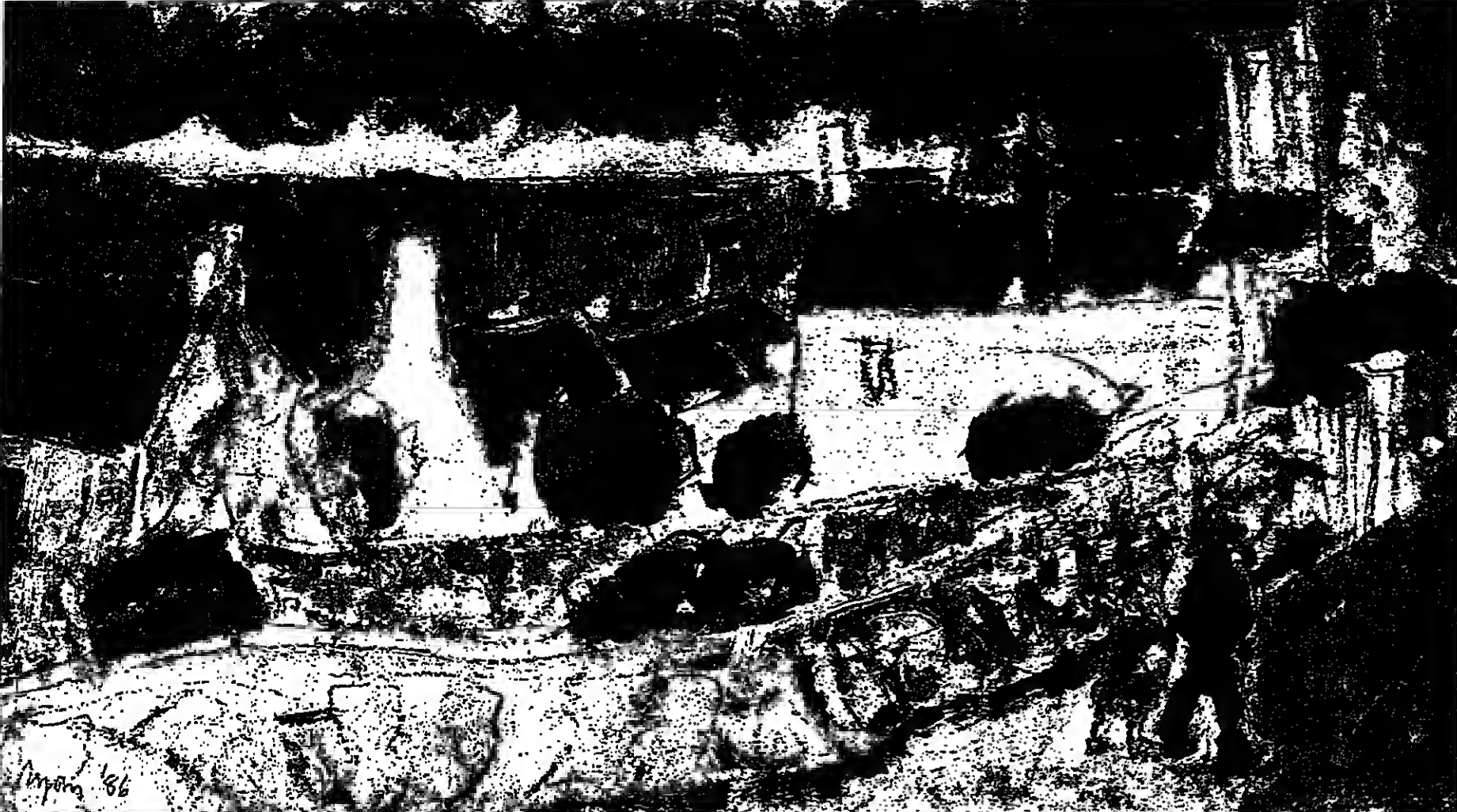
He belonged to an old-fashioned, gentlemanly school that found something vulgar in the overt pursuit of sales: he never painted solely to appease his critics or his public. He was a genuinely modest and self-effacing man, and was quietly amused to be given a Gulbenkian prize awarded specifically to neglected artists.

Ryan was born in Hampstead in 1920; his childhood was divided between the family homes of Hintlesham Hall in Suffolk, and Villa Santa Lucia at Cagnes-sur-Mer. Both his parents were painters, and his father, Vivian Ryan, who was deaf and dumb, particularly encouraged him. After Eton, he trained briefly as an architect before joining the Slade during its wartime evacuation in Oxford.

Excused military service on medical grounds, he was able to set himself up as an artist whilst most of his contemporaries were still in uniform. His first studio in Tite Street was shared with Augustus John's son Edwin, and one of his most important early alliances was formed in Chelsea with Matthew Smith. These two unlikely campaigners once went electioneering in Hartlepool for a wealthy Liberal patron of Smith's, Ryan acting as chauffeur and Smith squeaking high-pitched exhortations to the voters.

Ryan was taken up by Rex Nan Kivell at the Redfern Gallery, who gave him his first exhibition in 1943; four more followed during the next decade. One of the first to buy his work was the painter and collector Edward Le Bas, whose support conferred an enviable degree of distinction on the young artist.

Like Le Bas, Ryan inherited enough money - in his case from his grandfather, Sir Gerald Ryan - to build an impressive collection of pictures, predominantly of the French painters with whom he felt a special affinity including Bonnard, Modigliani, Utrillo and Soutine. In this he was encouraged notably by his friend Eardley Knollys, from whose



Love Lane, Mousehole by Ryan, who lived and worked in the Cornish port from 1945 to 1951 and from 1959 to 1963

Estate of Adrian Ryan

Storran Gallery many of his purchases were made.

Later the failure of his brother's ambitious farming projects obliged him to disperse the collection, and also to seek a regular income from teaching. He joined the staff of Goldsmiths' College in 1948, and taught at Cambridge College of Art. He was a committed, if taciturn, tutor who preferred to give individual advice, and was as often to be found in a nearby pub as in the teaching studios. He retired in 1983.

Ryan was a natural and prolific painter, who never contemplated a life away from the easel, nor travelled abroad without a clutch of sketchbooks in which to record impressions for later translation on to

canvas. Because he lived and worked at Mousehole in Cornwall for two periods - from 1945 to 1951 and from 1959 to 1963 - he was often associated with the nearby colony of artists at St Ives. He had many links there - in particular with Peter Lanyon, Sven Berlin and Patrick Heron, who had been one of his first champions in the *New Statesman* and elsewhere - and he exhibited in the third and last exhibition of the St Ives Society of Artists, in 1948. But Ryan was unimpressed by his friends' enthusiasm for abstraction, and he continued to paint, away from the excitement for Abstract Expressionism, in an idiom derived from the Ecole de Paris.

Landscapes of Cornwall, France and later Suffolk were rendered in vivid colour, and with free, expressive brush strokes. Still-lives provided his favourite subjects (he wrote a short handbook on still-life painting) - delicious assemblages, in particular of oysters, crayfish, herrings and other seafood, which sometimes betray an unexpected undertone of disquiet.

These he showed regularly with the London Group and at the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibitions. He was given exhibitions at the Milneries in Colchester in 1964 and 1988; and latterly two shows under the auspices of the National Trust, "A Kettle of Fish" at Sutton House in London in 1994 and "Four Seasons"

at Petworth the following year, introducing him to a new audience. Although his work was bought by the Tate Gallery and by public museums abroad, much of the best remains in private hands. A full retrospective is certainly overdue.

Adrian Ryan's easy charm and dry, ironic humour were appreciated by many. He could be free with his affections, but he never lost the loyalty of his former lovers. He is survived by all three of his wives and by three daughters.

JAMES BEECHER

Adrian James Ryan, painter: born London 3 October 1920; twice married (three daughters); died London 15 December 1998.



Hazel Bishop

TO THE pleasure of women everywhere and that of many stray husbands (although not necessarily at the same time or for the same reasons), Hazel Bishop's greatest achievement, in a life that saw success in business, finance and academics, was cooking up the first kissproof lipstick ("stays on you... not on him") in a kitchen fitted out as a laboratory.

It was soon after the Second World War that Bishop, a trained chemist, developed a non-drying, non-irritating, long-wearing lipstick. Her revolutionary formulation contained high amounts of staining dyes called bromo acids and, in 1950, she formed Hazel Bishop Inc to manufacture and sell her discovery.

"Never again need you be embarrassed by smearing friends, children, relatives, husband, sweetheart," the early advertising said, noting that older formulations tended to leave marks on glasses, cigarettes and teeth. Moreover, the new brand did not have to be applied several times a day.

When it was introduced, at \$1 a tube, it found instant public acceptance and soon captured 25 per cent of the fast-growing lipstick market, setting the company on a collision course with Revlon in what became known as "the lipstick wars". However, Bishop was locked in a feud with her company's majority shareholder and left the company in 1954 in settlement of a lawsuit. She set up Hazel Bishop Laboratories to produce household and personal care products, but ran into more legal problems with her former partner and lost the right to sell or promote products under her own name.

Bishop then became, by turns, a stockbroker, a financial analyst specialising in cosmetics companies, and finally, in 1980, she took up the Revlon Chair in Cosmetics Marketing at the Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan.

Hazel Bishop was born in Hoboken, New Jersey, in 1906. Her father ran a dozen successful businesses from shops along the town's main street. On one occasion, he brought Santa Claus to town on an elephant to advertise his sweet shop. "The family talk around the dinner table always concerned business," Bishop recalled.

After graduating from Barnard College in Manhattan, New York, Bishop planned to go to medical school, but the stock market crash forced her to take a job with a dermatologist, investigating allergies and cosmetics.

During the Second World War she worked as an organic chemist for what is now Exxon, where she discovered the cause of deposits affecting superchargers of aircraft engines. She was a demure woman with hazel eyes and a weakness for hats, and never married. During her courting years, she explained, she had felt the obligation to keep her widowed mother company. Yet the woman who invented kissable lipstick and always mixed her own was able to offer sage advice.

"Women should use make-up to accentuate their most attractive feature," she said. "After the age of 25 or thereabouts, personality becomes an increasingly more attractive feature."

EDWARD HELMORE

Hazel Bishop, chemist: born Hoboken, New Jersey 17 August 1906; Revlon Professor of Cosmetics Marketing, Fashion Institute of Technology, New York 1980-87; died Rye, New York 4 December 1998.

Dame Unity Lister

UNITY LISTER was a formidable Tory matron who liked to smoke large and expensive cigars. She was a long-serving member of the London County Council and its successor body, the Greater London Council - from 1949 to 1983, and as Deputy Chairman in 1963-64 - and a passionate believer in Britain's place at the centre of Europe. To this end she served as a member of the executive of the European Union of Women from 1971, and was a member of the European Movement and the Conservative Group for Europe.

In 1970, when I was working at the Conservative Research Department, I was detailed to act as secretary to an outfit of which I had never heard. The outfit was the Conservative Outside Organisations Women's Committee, and its matron was Unity Lister. Somewhat to my surprise I found her to be a woman possessed both of steely intelligence and immense charm.

The immediate purpose of the committee was to encourage Tory women to join non-party organisations with charitable purposes and to express the party's view on all matters connected with social welfare. It was the brainchild of Joan



Varley, then a senior functionary at Conservative Central Office, who had noted that Labour activists - and Labour views - seemed over-influential in non-political organisations.

Joan Varley and I were paid party officials. But the public faces of the committee - and the two who exercised its real muscle - were Unity Lister and Sarah Morrison. They had the inestimable advantage of enjoying the complete trust of the party leader, Edward Heath, Lister because of her marked Euromphilia, Morrison be-

cause of her extensive knowledge of matters concerned with the operation of the Welfare State.

With the influence of these formidable women behind it, the committee's remit was steadily extended, and included the drafting of the Tory response to Barbara (now Lady) Castle's Equal Opportunities Bill and the preparation of the party's argument for entry into the (then) European Economic Community.

Unity Webley was born at Woolwich in 1913, the daughter of a doc-

She presided over the debate with humour and aplomb, but also with the strict sense of control which marked all her public appearances

tor. Her mother was a fervent Quaker, and she thus grew up imbued with the ideals of public service. Her wider consciousness was expanded by attendance at a French finishing school and, later at the Sorbonne. She had a particular facility for foreign languages, and this earned her an important post in the Military Censor's office during the Second World War.

In 1940 she married an old school friend, Sam Lister, a mechanical engineer who ran a small family firm of manufacturers. Her husband had

a keenly developed interest in local government, and became a Woolwich councillor. When it was suggested that he stand for the LCC, however, he demurred, and proposed his wife instead. She was duly elected in 1949 and served as an exceptionally effective deputy chairman between 1963 and 1964.

This apprenticeship served her well when she came to face her greatest opportunity in political life, which was also her greatest trial. She had, over the years, risen effortlessly through the voluntary ranks of her party and, in 1971, was chairman of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, and thus had the duty of taking the chair at the party conference that year.

The job of conference chairman in 1971 was a peculiarly difficult one. On the one hand, the exhilaration born of an unexpected general election victory in 1970 had not worn off. On the other, the party was riven by doubts about the wisdom of the leadership's policy for entry into the EEC, doubts fuelled by the passionate rhetoric of the foremost political orator of the day, Enoch Powell.

Lister presided over the fervent and turbulent debate on European policy - there were 125 amend-

ments to the substantive motion - with humour and aplomb, but also with the strict sense of control which marked all her public appearances. Not least because of her efficacy the policy of the Government was carried by a resounding majority. She was rewarded the following year by being appointed DBE.

One of the first things I - and many others - found in working with Unity Lister was her utter lack of pomposity. She exercised great authority, but she never pulled rank. She could - and did - use great charm, but she never cajoled. She had a marked force of personality, but she never used it to browbeat an opponent. However, if one left her company having disagreed with her, one was left with a feeling of sadness that one had disappointed her.

PATRICK COSGRAVE

Unity Viola Lister, politician: born London 9 June 1913; Member, LCC 1949-65, GLC 1965-83, Deputy Chairman 1963-64; OBE 1958, DBE 1972; Chairman, Women's National Advisory Committee 1966-69; Chairman, National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations 1970-71; married 1940 Samuel Lister (died 1995); died 15 December 1998.

Morris Udall

MORRIS UDALL came close to winning the Democratic nomination for president in 1976. In no fewer than six primary elections he came second, sometimes by very narrow margins, so that Jimmy Carter won the nomination. Udall served in the House of Representatives for 30 years, and frequently challenged the leadership of both parties. He was a strong liberal in the western tradition, with a particular interest in environmental issues. He was a pioneer opponent of the tobacco industry and as early as 1963 proposed legislation that could have put cigarette manufacturers under the control of the Federal Food and Drug Administration.

He was a leading campaigner for reform of election finance laws and drafted and led the campaign for the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971. He was also in favour of a national health insurance system.

"Mo" Udall was a rugged westerner who looked the part - he was 6ft 5in tall - and came from rugged western Mormon stock. His great-grandfather led the first Mormons out of Utah into what was then the Arizona territory. His father, Levi Udall, started out digging ditches, became a successful farmer, qualified as a lawyer, and served for years on the Arizona Supreme Court, ending up as the state's chief justice.

Mo was one of five children of Levi and Louise Udall. His mother published a book about the life of a Hopi Indian woman. His older brother Stew served in Congress, then resigned to be President John F. Kennedy's secretary of the interior.

When Mo was five years old his eye was injured by a boy he was playing with. At that time his father could not afford proper medical care, so he was taken to a country doctor who was "mostly drunk" and treated the eye with poultices. The eye became infected and was eventually lost.

In spite of his handicap, Udall volunteered for the army air force, where he reached the rank of captain and served in the South Pacific. It wasn't until he got into the army that he got the first decent glass eye he had had; unlike its primitive predecessors, it matched the colour of his good eye.

He commanded an all-black unit in Louisiana for two years, an experience that, he later said, "really shaped my life". Fighting his men's battles against the routine discriminations of the Deep South in those days, coming on top of his own personal handicap, turned him into a quiet but very determined, even radical fighter for a fairer society.

After leaving the army he went to the University of Arizona, where he was elected president of the student body and, in spite of the loss of one eye, played intercollegiate basketball. Later he played briefly as a professional basketball player for the Denver Nuggets, before going to law school and setting up as a lawyer in Tucson in partnership with his brother Stewart.

Udall became a congressman in a special election called after his brother



Udall sporting a beard after a six-day trip down the Colorado River in 1967

The experience of commanding an all-black unit in Louisiana, he said, 'shaped my life'. The routine discriminations, coming on top of his own personal handicap, turned him into a radical fighter for a fairer society

er joined the Kennedy Administration. As soon as he arrived in Washington he disclosed his personal finances, something most unusual at the time, and he campaigned for greater transparency and for reform of the law on campaign finance. The reforms incorporated in the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act, of which he was a major sponsor, played an important part in exposing the Nixon administration's casual attitude to campaign finance and thus led to the Watergate scandal.

In 1967 Udall refused to vote for the unseating of the black congressman Adam Clayton Powell, accused of financial impropriety, on the grounds that it would constitute an injustice to his Harlem constituents. He also expressed "a deep-seated and conscientious dis-

agreement" with his own Mormon church over its segregationist policies towards black people.

In the 1970s he also campaigned against "strip mining", unregulated open-cast mining, and although his bill was twice vetoed by President Gerald Ford, it passed in 1977, saving millions of acres of land. And in the 1980s, already a sick man, he led the campaign against drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

Twice in the 1970s Udall campaigned to be Speaker of the House of Representatives, and again to be majority leader, the number two leadership position, but in each case without success. He was however a genuinely serious candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1976, even

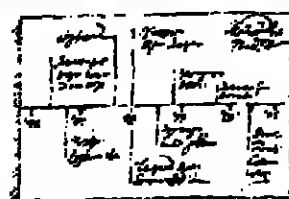
though he later wrote a book about his experience called *Too Funny to Be President* (1983).

He was in fact a very funny man, with a dry western sense of humour and a nice ability to make jokes against himself. He was much in demand in Washington as an after-dinner speaker. When already seriously ill with Parkinson's disease he compared that horrible condition to a woman called Paula Parkinson who was starring in a contemporary sex-and-lobbying scandal: "They both keep you up at night," he quipped, "and they both give you the shakes."

The last years of his life were rather terrible. He spent them in a Veterans Administration hospital in Washington DC, much of the time unconscious. One of his children, Mark Udall, has just been elected to the House of Representatives from Colorado, as has a nephew, Tom Udall of New Mexico.

GODFREY HODGSON

Morris King Udall, politician: born St Johns, Arizona 15 June 1922; member, US House of Representatives 1961-91; married 1949 Patricia Emery (three sons, three daughters; marriage dissolved 1966); 1968 Ella Royston (died 1988); 1989 Norma Gilbert; died Washington DC 12 December 1998.



HISTORICAL NOTES

FINIAN CUNNINGHAM

A conflict between justice and the law

CALLS FOR justice in the case of Augusto Pinochet were countered by calls from leading political and economic figures in Chile, Britain and elsewhere for what seems to be a higher objective in the South American country: stability. The case illustrates the aphorism coined by Herbert Pell, the US delegate to the United Nations War Crimes Commission during the Second World War, who noted: "There has always been a certain conflict between justice and the law."

There are substantial grounds and legal mechanisms for a prosecution. But there is a historic tendency among Western powers in particular to turn a blind eye to crimes against humanity, in the interests of stability. This "stability" has often little to do with justice or meaningful peace and everything to do with securing political and economic advantage for the arbitrating powers.

Historical experience suggests that reneging on justice for victims of state-sponsored crimes serves grievously to weaken the force of international law and to sow the seeds for future despotism.

A pertinent example is the genocide of the Armenian people perpetrated by the Ittihadist regime in Turkey, one of the most notorious episodes of the First World War, in which up to a million Armenians died. At the height of the killings, public outrage in

Britain and America spurred the governments of Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson to commit themselves to prosecute the Ittihadists at the war's end for "crimes against humanity and civilisation".

However, in the post-war carve-up of Turkey's Ottoman empire, the demands for justice by the Western powers were subordinated to their strategic interests of stabilising new territories in the oil-rich region. By deftly playing Britain, France and the US off against another, the Turks were able to get the Western powers to reneg on their erstwhile commitment to establish an Armenian republic and specifically to grant amnesty to all Ittihadists involved in the genocide of the Armenians.

This ignominious betrayal not only forfeited an opportunity to underpin international law, it would serve as a precedent for a later, terrifyingly greater crime against humanity: the Jewish Holocaust. When Hitler was fleshing out his programme of racial extermination, he would often refer to the Armenian genocide, and specifically the international powers' unwillingness to do anything about it, as a crucial precedent. As early as June 1931, he is recorded as saying that the "extermination of the Armenians" had taught him to see "masses of men as mere biological plasticine". In 1939, as his Final Solution for the Jews was being imple-

mented the Führer was to demand, "Who still talks of the Armenians?"

The Nuremberg Trials are widely presumed to be a high point in international law enforcement but, as Herbert Pell and others were to note, justice was compromised even in this most heinous case of crimes against humanity. While the most prominent Nazis were convicted, thousands of other senior Nazis, SS commandants and Gestapo officers were to walk free. One such, Gestapo leader Walter Rauss, who had gained promotion for his innovative use of gas trucks to murder Jewish women and children on the Eastern Front, was to enjoy a life of freedom in Chile thanks to the intercession of American Intelligence and Italian ecclesiastics.

The rationale for abrogating thorough prosecution and denazification by the Western powers was their imperative need for securing "political and economic stability" in a post-war Germany and Europe faced with a surge in anti-Fascist sentiment and widespread popularity of democratic socialism.

Who talks of the Armenians, the Jews, or indeed the disappeared of Chile?

A study of genocide and human rights, 'The Splendid Beast' by Christopher Simpson, is published by Grove Press (£12)

Clinton and Islam: eyeless in Gaza

THE PALESTINIANS were delirious with joy at the beginning of the week, waving the stars and stripes. It seemed every Muslim in Gaza had turned out to welcome President Bill Clinton. They had come a long way from the burning of the American flag which had been associated with their fathers. It was as great a revolution in political thinking as one could imagine. But by the end of the week they were hating it again.

Clinton's presence and reception made several important points. It emphasised once again the supremacy of the US as the single most powerful nation on earth in the last years of the century. And it pointed out the links between what is happening in the Muslim world and the politics of Washington.

The US president's few hours in Gaza endorsed and embodied the aspirations of an entire people. The Palestinians felt as if they had almost achieved their separate nation - although Clinton, always the wily lawyer, said nothing to indicate this.

The president, with his mind on the impeachment proceedings developing in Washington, walked about as if he was dazed in Gaza. He brought to mind Milton's Samson. Each was, in his time and in different ways, the strongest man in the world. Like the biblical hero the US president had also "erred" and "by bad women been deceived". And of him too it might be said: "Ask for this great deliverer now and find him eyeless in Gaza."

For President Clinton has a terrible blindness when it comes to understanding the Muslim world, as was only too evident when the bombing of Iraq began. Saddam is without doubt a ruthless military dictator. But sending in the bombers whenever Washington needs a diversion - as was earlier done in Sudan and Afghanistan - only succeeds in building sympathy among moderate Muslims for the Iraqi leader. Few Muslims will doubt that this week's bombing was linked to Clinton's impeachment proceedings.

But there is another sign of

Washington's myopia. While the Palestinians were grateful for and ecstatic about Clinton's visit, Muslims in other parts of the world felt frustrated and let down by Washington. In both Kosovo and Kashmir thousands of ordinary people - farmers, housewives, school-going children - face savage persecution. Houses are blown up and members of the family tortured. Young men are taken away by security forces and never return and young women are subjected to sexual harassment. The bombs on Iraq only add to the feeling that American justice is blind in one eye.

FAITH & REASON

AKBAR AHMED

The decision to bomb Iraq reveals the continuing blindness of Washington to the sensitivities of Muslims all over the world. It is a myopia which could have terrible consequences

If course, Muslims themselves inflict damage on their own people; Algeria, Sudan, Afghanistan are examples of societies tearing themselves apart. Savagery is conducted here in the name of Islam. But once again, the West is implicated - France's support in Algeria and those US air strikes on Sudan and Afghanistan. Inevitably the theme of the power of Washington in the Muslim world will be picked up in the sermons in the mosque in the coming weeks of the month of Ramadan which starts this weekend.

The month is one of the most important for Muslims. It is when Muslims tend to withdraw from the daily routine to fast, meditate and pray. The fast

itself is not like a Christian fast; it is a total abstention of food and drink from sunrise to sunset. During the fast people also abstain from anger, gossip, sexual intercourse and more. As a result the atmosphere among Muslims tends to be charged during the month to come. It is easy to dream dreams because of the lightness of the mind and it is not surprising to see Muslims expressing religious fervour. The mosques are full and people attempt to complete the reading of the entire Koran during these weeks.

For British Muslims - as for the billion or more Muslims elsewhere in the world - the month with be a time of renewal. It will be a time when Muslims will be thinking of both pious deeds of charity and of standing up to tyranny. In both cases they will be thinking of the suffering of fellow Muslims throughout the world and that is where the contradictory messages of Gaza, of Kosovo and of Iraq will become relevant and affective.

For those in the West who think of Muslims as fanatics and extremists it is well to recall the famous chant enunciated by the Sufi master Junaid of Baghdad centuries ago:

In Sufism, eight qualities must be exercised. The Sufi has: liberality such as that of Abraham; acceptance of his lot, as Islam accepted; patience, as possessed by Job; capacity to communicate by symbolism, as in the case of Zachariah; estrangement from his own people, which was the case with John; woolen garb like the shepherd's mantle of Moses; journeying like the travelling of Jesus; humility, as Mohammed had humility of spirit.

Young men expressing their anger by throwing grenades, killing innocent civilians in the bazaar or kidnapping Western hostages - such actions are certainly not either the teaching or the spirit of Islam. But until Washington is able to open its eyes to the impact of its policies on the Islamic world such atrocities will continue. It gives most Muslims no joy to say so, but the West needs to hear it.

'Islam Today: a short introduction to the Muslim world' by Akbar Ahmed is published by I.B. Tauris next month

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

WALDEN: On 17 December 1998 Bron died peacefully at home. A unique and irreplaceable friend, respected colleague of all at B.M.I. Healthcare in Nottingham and London. Funeral services at St Wilfrid's Church, North Muskham, near Newark, on Wednesday 23 December at 2pm followed by private interment. No flowers please, donations if desired for the Nottinghamshire Leukaemia Appeal may be sent to E. Gill and Sons Limited, Funeral Directors, 55 Albert Street, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG24 4BQ.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. **TOMORROW:** The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am; 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Irish Guards.

Announcements for BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

BIRTHDAYS

TODAY: Sir Antony Buck QC, former MP; 70; Mr Ross Buckland, chief executive, Unigate; 56; The Right Rev Ian Harland, Bishop of Carlisle; 66; Brigadier Lewis Harris, cartographer; 88; Mr Derrick Heaven, High Commissioner to Jamaica; 58; Sir Brian Hill, former chairman, Higgs & Hill; 66; Mr Paul Horrocks, Editor, *Manchester Evening News*; 45; Mr Steven Isserlis, cellist; 40; Mr Syd Little, comedian; 56; Mr Robert Ponsonby, former Controller of Music, BBC; 71; The Marquess of Queensberry, former professor of ceramics at the Royal College of Art; 89; Dr David Bower-Beddoe, chairman, Welsh Development Agency; 61; Sir David Rowe-Bam, former Lord Mayor of London; 63; Professor Christopher Smout, historian; 65; Lord Weir, a former Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland; 67; Mr Maurice White, rock singer; 57.

TOMORROW: Miss Jenny Agutter, actress; 46; Mr Michael Beaumont, Seigneur of Sark; 71; Lord Brabazon of Tara, former government minister; 52; Mr Billy Bragg, rock singer and songwriter; 40; Mr Simon Channing, former Chairman, London Philharmonic; 38; Sir George Coldstream QC, former Permanent Secretary to the Lord Chancellor; 91; Mr Malcolm Cooper, marksman; 51; Mr Peter Criss, rock drummer; 58; Mr Charles Denton, television and film producer; 61; Miss Bo Derek, actress; 41; Mr

Bo Diddley, singer and guitarist; 70; Mr Anthony Galsworthy, ambassador to China; 54; Lord Howe of Aberavon QC, former Cabinet minister; 72; Mr Simon Hughes, cricketer; 39; Miss Lesley Judd, actress; 52; Mr James Leasor, writer; 75; Sir Gavin Lightman, High Court judge; 59; Mr Donald Tandy, actor; 80; Baroness Thomas of Walliswood, former Chairman, Surrey County Council; 63; Miss Rachel Trickett, former Principal, St Hugh's College, Oxford; 75; Mr John Whitney, former Director-General, IBA; 68; Mr John Wilkins, editor, *The Tablet*; 62.

ANNIVERSARIES

TODAY: Births: Sir Stanley Unwin, publisher; 1884; Oliver Hazard Perry La Farge, writer; 1901; Sir Ralph David Richardson, actor; 1902; Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, Soviet leader; 1906; Jean Genet, playwright and essayist; 1910; Edith Piaf (Edith Giovanna Gassion), singer; 1915. Deaths: Frederick Melchior; Baron von Grimm, German statesman and wit; 1807; Joseph Mallord William Turner, painter; 1851; Sir Paul Gavrilovich Vinogradoff, lawyer and historian; 1925; Robert Andrews Millikan, physicist; 1953. On this day: the United States recognised the independence of Hawaii; 1842; in the New Hebrides, over 500 people were killed following a volcanic eruption; 1913; the German luxury liner *Columbus* was scuttled by her crew after being inter-

cepted by a British destroyer. 1939; the British evacuated Penang; 1941; an air service between London and Moscow began; 1957; Ted Hughes was appointed Poet Laureate; 1984. Today is the Feast Day of St Anastasius I of Antioch, St Gregory of Auxerre, St Nemesius of Alexandria and St Timothy.

TOMORROW: Births: Pieter de Hooch, painter; 1629; John Wilson Croker, politician and reviewer; 1780; The Rev Edwin Abbott Abbott, headmaster and theologian; 1838; Theodore Francis Powys, novelist; 1875; Sir Robert Gordon Menzies, statesman; 1894; Lt-Gen Sir Frederick Arthur Montague Browning; 1896. Deaths: Henry Harland, novelist and editor; 1905; Emile-François Loubet, statesman; 1929; Erich James Hilton, novelist; 1954; Moss Hart, playwright; 1961; John Ernest Steinbeck, novelist; 1968; Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco, Spanish prime minister, assassinated; 1973; Arthur Rubinstein, pianist; 1982; Gwen Berryman, actress ("Doris Archer"); 1983; Bill Brandt, photographer; 1983. On this day: the first General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was held; 1560; Peter the Great's reformation of the Russian calendar was announced; 1699; the last issue of the original *Spectator* was published; 1714; the State of Texas was incorporated in the United States; 1845; the State of South Carolina seceded from the American Union; 1860; the first London performance of the operetta

Madame Pompadour was presented; 1923; Karl Renner became the first president of the new Austrian republic; 1945; the first atomic ice-breaker, the Russian *Lening*, began operating; 1959; Wladyslaw Gomułka, the Polish Communist leader, resigned office after riots by workers; 1970; Romuald Spasowski, Polish ambassador to the US, was granted political asylum in the United States; 1981; two Townsend Thoresen ferries collided off Harwich, with the loss of six lives; 1982. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Ammon and his Companions, St Dominic of Silos, St Philogonius and St Ursinus.

LECTURES

TODAY: National Gallery: Richard Stemp, "Gifts (iii): Veronese, *The Adoration of the Kings*", 12 noon. Victoria and Albert Museum: Katharine Hugh, "Scenes from the Nativity", 2pm. Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Time Travellers in Art", 1pm. British Museum: Delia Pemberton, "Looking at Ancient Egyptian Sculpture", 11.30am; Delia Pemberton, "The Divine Image in Ancient Egypt", 1.30pm.

TOMORROW: Victoria and Albert Museum: Charlotte Cotton, "Displaying Photographs", 2pm. Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Spells of Artistic Magic", 2.30pm.

Quiet at the back of the class

Gavin Bryars' music is slow. So what? Slow rivers run deep. And in the case of his Lockerbie requiem, depth is what's called for. By Dermot Clinch

Gavin Bryars has had operas put on at the Opera in Paris and the Coliseum in London. His CD of *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* has sold a quarter of a million copies. He calls the composers Steve Reich and Arvo Part "Steve" and "Arvo" and has dined with Jesse Norman. But at a school reunion recently there were many present who were just as successful. There was his "friend Doug, who's quite well known in his field, which is geography". There was "a British Airways pilot. There was a girl who married this guy who's a millionaire."

Bryars lives in Wedge Cottage, behind the hairdressers, in a small village in east Leicestershire. He was at Goole Grammar School, near Hull, which is now comprehensive and, according to what he hears, more violent than it was in his day. In the old days, the thug quota was filled by Bryars himself, throwing pencils at teachers' heads and refusing to play sport until the day when he did and he "got vast scores and the highest batting average of the season". Bryars is in his mid-fifties, but takes a proud interest in his distant past, in the way of one not altogether certain about the present. He won the Goole Grammar School English prize. He and Doug "got the highest A-level grades" and his form master warned him: "You know, Bryars, you're not going to be able to get through life with this gift for improvisation."

He did, to the extent of playing double bass in a freely improvising jazz trio, and becoming one of the most widely enjoyed serious composers of his generation. He went to Sheffield university "by accident" and read philosophy. At a later date, he says, still improvising, he "drifted into vegetarianism" and also into composing. He took lessons in composition from the organist at Sheffield Cathedral, and made his own way thereafter.

Bryars was once the mild-mannered *enfant terrible* of English experimentalism. This has changed. He has a publisher (he used to publish his own). He has accepted a commission for the London Sinfonietta. New Music institution par excellence. And next Monday his *Codman Requiem*, a revised version of the 1989 score, this time with Renaissance viols instead of modern strings, in memory of a friend and colleague killed in the Lockerbie air crash, will be performed in Westminster Cathedral on the 10th anniversary of the disaster to an audience of 1,000, including invited politicians. Bryars has not quite stopped throwing pencils.

We met in a converted garage

Bryars, the mild-mannered enfant terrible of English experimentalism, has changed

overlooking a fishpond at the bottom of Bryars' garden. The same day, as it happened, the Secretary General of the United Nations was meeting Colonel Gaddafi to talk about Lockerbie in a tent in the middle of the Libyan desert. The tent was "warmed by bonfires" and the Secretary General had an experience, he later said, of "spacelessness, freedom, almost mystical". He might have been describing the music of Gavin Bryars.

The garage is Bryars' studio. There are Supra brand fish flakes by the door, cigarillos marked "100 per cent tobacco" on the wide, wide desk, Bissley filing cabinets against the wall. There are the works of Wagner, Strauss and Monteverdi in score (Bryars has been studying Monteverdi's madrigals in preparation for his own, to poems by Blake Morrison); a digital metronome, a digital tuning-fork, a Panasonic pencil sharpener. There are handbills of Aztec 101 Scoremaster pencils. And

there are the four volumes of Charles Koechlin's *Traité de l'orchestration*, a chance purchase he made in Lyons, and an unconventional choice.

Half-way through our interview Bryars makes a phone call to someone he describes himself as having "developed a relationship" with, who is "coming over for Christmas, and so on". This is Anya, a Russian-Canadian film director, he explains, who was asleep in a bed in British Columbia. His six-thirty alarm call was five minutes late. When they speak, Bryars says he will be having salmon tonight. He will do it with soy sauce and ginger, her way, and will let her know whether it worked.

This seems a good time for intimate musical enquiries, and for a question about a "ping", or perhaps

"ting", to he heard towards the end of *Funerailles* to Philosophy. Bryars' cello concerto – a single note I noticed when listening to the piece the night before, whose contribution to the work's glacier-slow architecture seemed out of all proportion to its humble isolation. In the recording with the cellist Julian Lloyd Webber – whose reactionary musical opinions Bryars does not share, but whose commissions he warmly accepts – the ping occurs towards the beginning of track seven.

Bryars leans forward, switches on his electronic keyboard, slips on his half-moon glasses. Why that instrumentation? "Well, I have a score," Bryars is really looking like a composer now. "It could be a harp. Yes, it's this harp harmonic here. A completely isolated note. Why? Because the accompanying instruments are holding a sustained F. Because I want to give an impetus to the phrase, a sense of breath. Because a pizzicato string would be

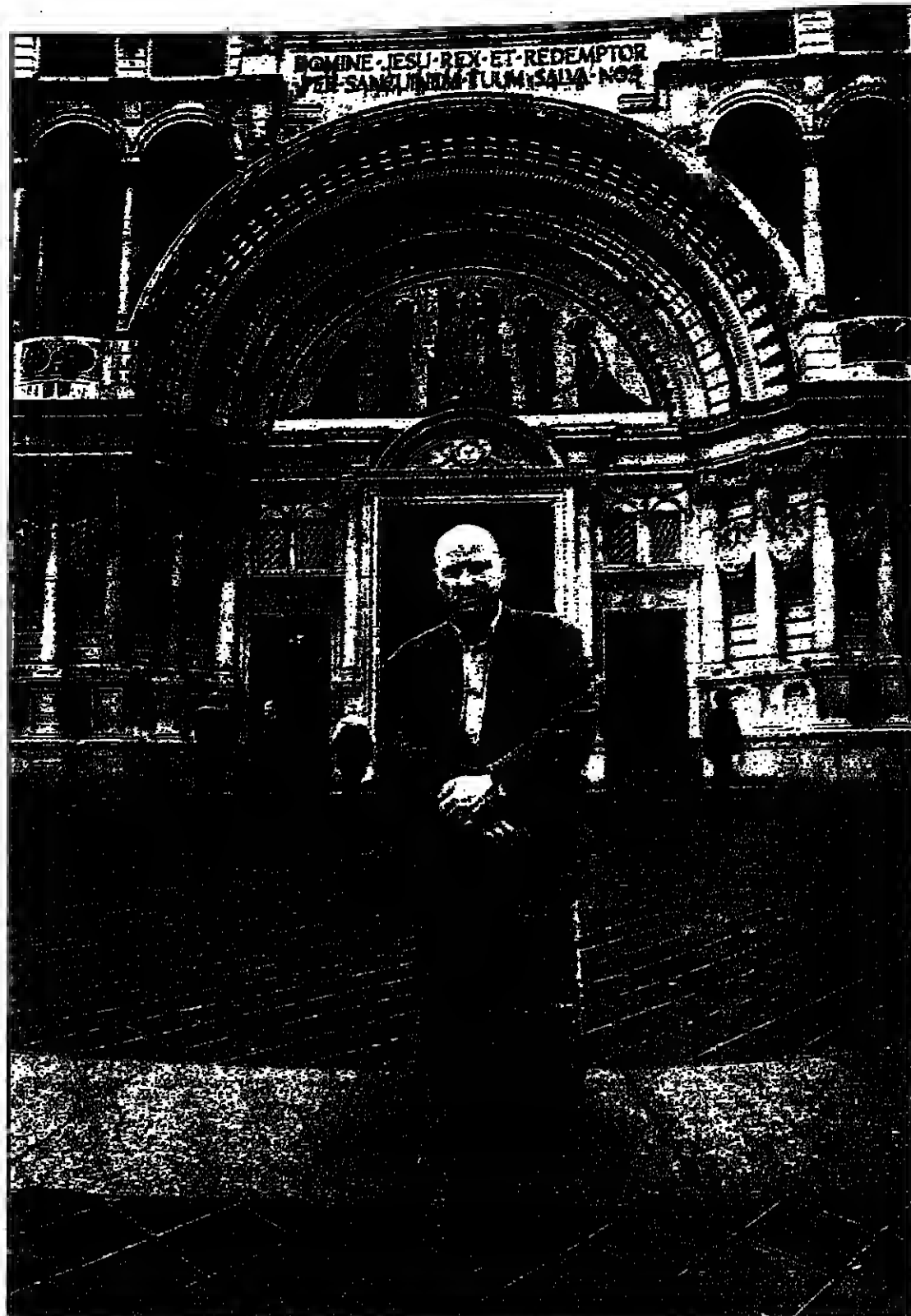
too heavy, and a harp harmonic is enough. Not too solid."

Bryars taught music for many years, at De Montfort University, formerly Leicester Polytechnic, but his music is not academically complex. Anyone "can compose in any ivory tower. But you have to pop down the stairs at some point." Bryars describes an amateur chorister who sang a piece of his and asked for his autograph, "because, she said, 'I don't know any of your other music, but I think this is just lovely.'" Bryars is visibly moved when recalling this.

His music is harmonically simple, slow, and repetitive. One critic suggested that having first a tramp then Tom Waits groaning *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* over and over for 70 minutes in Bryars' most famous piece was "monstrously turgid" and a recipe for "epic boringness". Bryars answered that if any one thought so, they should play the piece "at a very low level during dinner".

He is pragmatic. He has fallen in and out of so much, so accidentally, that he needs to be. When there were no commissions from orchestras he formed bands with friends and wrote pieces "for two pianos, six hands; or two pianos and tuba; or one piano, tuba, tenor horn. Not particularly graceful or likely, but you learnt how to make things that sound interesting." Michael Nyman, rich and conspicuously famous, came up to Bryars after his new opera this year and said: "God, how do you do that orchestration?" "It depends which hooks you read, Michael," Bryars says he replied, sarcastically. In fact, he remarks, it has "all got to do with experience".

Jesus' Blood has not started earning for him yet. *The Sinking of the Titanic*, his early hit, was not chosen for the film, *Titanic*. But the BBC – which played not a single work of his for 17 years – cottoned on some time back, and his recent



A gift for improvisation: Bryars outside Westminster Cathedral

Philip Meech

work here has been acclaimed. His opera, *Dr Oz's Experiment*, went the obvious critical reaction, was slow. But all Bryars' music is slow. And like all his music Dr Oz was wholly individual: hooting counter-tenors, plucky jazz double basses, violins like fingers squeaking on a glass's rim. How do you measure success? Michael Nyman – "an old friend" ap-

parently – was "grumpy when he got £2m for *The Piano*. Accept it gracefully! I'm happy to be comfortable and not hugely in debt." Bryars gets philosophical. "Is it better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied? Technically it isn't – because the pig can't know what it is like to be Socrates." Then Bryars turns his back on philosophy, as he did 30

years ago in Sheffield. "I would prefer to know the source of my dissatisfaction. Personally, I would prefer to be Socrates dissatisfied."

The Hilliard Ensemble and Fretwork perform 'Codman Requiem' at Westminster Cathedral on Monday at 8pm. Free tickets in advance from the Barbican, 0171-638 8891

A bouquet of barbed twigs

I'LL SAY one thing for Joanna MacGregor – she didn't pretend to look pleased with the hideous sculpture of twigs and bits of gold wire she was given instead of flowers at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Tuesday.

Perhaps it echoed the theme of ironmongery in her programme, centred on John Cage's prepared piano – two instruments, to be precise: one with the elaborate array of bolts, screws and bits of rubber between the strings, specified for Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* and yielding the effect of a ghostly band of bells and metallophones; the other with the simpler preparation of rubber that Cage used to simulate a small percussion group in *Bacchanale*.

MacGregor played the *Sonatas and Interludes* in the second half, bringing to these

CLASSICAL

JOANNA MACGREGOR
OEH, SBC
LONDON

20 placid and charming pieces her own characteristic sense of impetus. Ideally, they effect a mood of stillness, and you might expect the performer to embody discreet composure.

MacGregor could not forbear to amplify each modest musical event with a gesture and the effect was just a touch condescending, unnecessary.

The concert was a project, with five new pieces specially written for the more elaborately prepared piano, plus tape – or tabla in one case – and, as a sort of filling between them, very short electroacoustic pieces, or soundbites, by students at Liverpool Hope Uni-

versity College, where MacGregor gave a workshop on prepared piano early in the year. Since all these, as well as *Bacchanale* and another early Cage piece, *The Perilous Night*, were played continuously, it took a while for the audience to get their bearings. Django Bates's *You Live and Learn* was identifiable from the taped vocals of his nine-year-old daughter and, if you were familiar with his work, you would soon have recognised the amiable playfulness of his style. Perhaps the playfulness is becoming a bit too cute, but it did point up the humourless tedium of the other pieces.

Deirdre Gribbin recorded her tape part in a Himalayan monastery and threw over its cavernous mummings an insistent rattling on the piano.

Jonathan Harvey should have known better than to take a work of genius – the fleeting last movement of Chopin's "Funeral March" Sonata – and then decompose it electronically, like an item in a guessing game. Andrew Toovey pitted syncopated stamping on tape against gamelan-like hurdling on prepared piano, and Talvin Singh, on tabla, joined MacGregor in what seemed like an ear-tickling but unremarkable improvisation.

For this programme to have featured in the South Bank's International Piano Series is a sort of achievement. Very few pianists could have swung it, and even fewer could have attracted such a substantial audience. Yet as far as I'm concerned, it was an experiment that needn't be repeated.

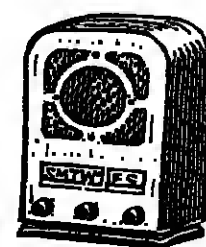
ADRIAN JACK

THE WEEK IN RADIO

ROBERT HANKS

THERE WAS a telling moment in one episode of *Yes, Prime Minister* when Jim Hacker was asking about the point of the independent nuclear deterrent – could it really scare the Russians? Of course not, he was told, the point was to scare the real enemy: the French.

A joke, you may think, but there are times when it seems unsettlingly close to the truth. Anglo-French relations came up for discussion on *Start the Week* (Radio 4, Monday), where it was suggested that the old stereotype of perfidious Albion is alive and well, and living in Paris. We fondly imagine that the Second World War created bonds of loyalty and gratitude between France and Britain; in fact, it seems, France regards Dunkirk as one item on a long list of betrayals, along with the destruction of the French fleet at Mers-el-Kabir, and the embarrassment of Suez.



The problem is, Paxman suggested, that where we take defeats as lessons in realism, the French continue to believe in a grand global destiny, thwarted by lesser nations.

This sounds like flighty, high-headed Continentals versus sturdy British common sense – but there is hard evidence that at least some French officials still think this way. In the past few weeks, there has been the case of Major Pierre-Henri Buel, a French officer who has admitted passing operational details of Nato air-strikes to the Serbs; and in 1994, a retired French general wrote to

Radovan Karadzic claiming that France and the Bosnian Serbs share a common cause, "the right of nations to reject German imperialism". In *A Mission to Civilise?* (Radio 4, Tuesday), Ofebea Quist-Arcton is examining France's role in Africa.

France has a tradition of pouring money into its former colonies – to help democracy, according to one Frenchman. Others see the picture through less rosy spectacles. One expert, discussing France's involvement with the genocide in Rwanda, characterised their policy thus: "We are fully prepared to support dictators here and there, provided they kill reasonably. But these guys were something else altogether; they were total psychopaths." Meanwhile, opposition politicians in Gabon complain that the presidency is, in effect, in France's gift. In return for France's support, oil flows

from Gabon to Elf, the French national oil company; and suitcases of money flow from Gabon to French political parties.

One Gabonese politician interviewed could see no problem here, so long as everybody gets a slice of the cake. But of course, not everybody does: Gabon enjoys the highest per capita income in black Africa, but ranks way down the tables on UN measures of development.

This is a disturbing programme – but not just because it exposed French corruption. As a French politician pointed out, France's African policy can be criticised, but at least it has one: the amount of aid France gives to Africa dwarfs the puny amounts this country sends, and not all of it goes into the pockets of the continent's politicians. We may be realistic; but perhaps an unrealistic sense of global destiny would have made us a bit more useful.

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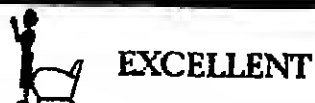
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THE WEEK IN REVIEW

BY FIONA STURGES



EXCELLENT



GOOD



OK



POOR



DEADLY

OVERVIEW

THE FILM THE PRINCE OF EGYPT



The Book of Exodus provides the inspiration for Disney's rival, DreamWorks, in this animated "live-action" film that follows the story of Moses.

"While the fear of offending is understandable, the earnest tone seems to squeeze much of the life from the film," remarked Anthony Quinn, adding, "the film has all the gravitas it can handle; what is missing, ironically enough, is not weight but vitality". The Guardian observed "fewer gags than Disney, and fewer funny animals.

scrappily portrayed at that - the Midianites' Rocks would shame Hanna Barbera". The Financial Times disagreed: "It is good because it has no cute animals, no love story and no sloppy takeaway moral". As epic, emotionally satisfying spectacle, it is way up there with the best in mainstream animation," stated Time Out.

DreamWorks' effort may seem incomplete to those of a sentimental bent - no fluffy animals or romantic subplot - though the subject matter offers scope for some suitably epic scenery.

The Prince of Egypt is on nationwide release, certificate U

THE PLAY PRESENT LAUGHTER



Noël Coward's centenary celebrations begin with a revival of the playwright's 1939 farce. Sir Ian McKellen takes the lead role as the actor and matinee idol Garry Essendine.

"McKellen delivers a performance of com-bustible energy and comic timing," cried Paul Taylor. "He captures Garry wonderfully well, whether assuming a martyr's mask or clutching his heart as though it were being cruelly pecked at." "There are occasions when Malcolm Sutherland's production reaches too blatantly for laughter. But you

never forget that McKellen is bringing energy, guile and skill to one of Coward's major comedies," reflected The Times, while the Daily Mail gushed: "Sir Ian's pulsating seriousness makes the character's absurdity even funnier... he manages to convey grandeur and dependency with startling originality".

The uneven casting and exaggerated slapstick of Malcolm Sutherland's production are soon forgotten as Sir Ian McKellen brings a magnetic energy to the role of Coward's alter ego.

Present Laughter is at the West Yorkshire Playhouse until 23 January. For booking and enquiries, call 0113-213 7700

THE BOOK THE UNKNOWN MATISSE



In this eagerly awaited biography, Hilary Spurling uncovers the tumultuous family life and precarious artistic career of the pioneer of Fauvist painting, Henri Matisse.

"It is well known that Matisse suffered public mockery and financial insecurity, but neither the degree of misery he endured nor its varying causes have ever been uncovered in such revelatory detail," wrote Frances Spalding, continuing, "the depth and intensity of Spurling's research compel attention." The Spectator called it "a

triumph of sympathy and tone", while The Sunday Telegraph was delighted: "Often, biographies of artists add little to one's understanding of their art. This is a splendid exception. By revealing the turmoil... behind that professorial mask, this book transforms our sense not only of Matisse but also of his work".

One of the best biographies of an artist of recent years, Hilary Spurling's study of Matisse is revealing about his troubled life and offers great insight into the changing nature of his art.

The Unknown Matisse by Hilary Spurling is available in bookshops now, published by Hamish Hamilton

THE TV PROGRAMME PERSONAL SERVICES



In the last of the series, Personal Services goes to South Shields to examine the strange goings-on in a laundrette that is mostly frequented by elderly ladies and bachelors.

"The washing basket is the window of the soul. That was the moral of Personal Services," said Matthew Sweet. "Posh Wosh was a social and spiritual service - a cross between a drop-in centre and the waiting room from Sartre's *Huis clos*." "A charming conclusion to a charming series," chimed The Daily Telegraph, while

The Guardian praised this "unpretentious little series... In Posh Wosh you can see all the stages of living and loving and losing." "John Pimm's engaging film got under the skin of the staff and their customers, revealing the dramas that peppered their lives without tipping over from warmth into sentimentality," wrote the Evening Standard.

The docu-drama lives on. It seems that there is no satisfying our interest in other people's daily routine and being privy to the intimate details in the lives of strangers.

This edition marks the end of Channel 4's Personal Services series. Wait for them to repeat it.

EXIT POLL

THE PLAY

id
YOUNG VIC STUDIO
LONDON

KEVIN MOLONEY

60, carer, London
"I am not unhappy about it; I just feel that the actors are being patronised. It doesn't have to be like that. They make me feel as though I am patronising them and I feel uncomfortable. I am enjoying what they are doing - I want them to do their thing. And I don't feel guilty about being here. I love to see them do it. I am just sorry there isn't a bigger audience."



WENDY MANNING

24, publisher, London
"It's all very well acted, very well delivered and it's a good story. It's like their other plays; they are all very good. This has lots of dancing. The music and the choreography are very good and so is the way the set and the costumes are simple but expressive, fitting in with the basic style of the play."



CLAIRE HOPKINS

46, writer, Wimbledon
"I thought it was absolutely fantastic. I saw a play of theirs last year and thought it was just brilliant. To tell their own story was a great idea. I really thought it was absolutely wonderful. What I liked most was the feeling of ensemble within the cast and the way that they all interacted. And the little fragment bits. It is definitely well worth seeing. I am going to recommend it to lots of people."



A month is a long time in sexual politics

IRRITABLE LASSITUDE on a great estate; an emphasis on shifting moods rather than events; chronic vacillations singled out as the key to the human condition - we have to be talking about Chekhov, don't we? Actually no, for all these features are richly evident in *A Month in the Country*, the Turgenev play which anticipated Chekhov's dramatic world by some 46 years.

Michael Attenborough now revives it at the RSC using a free version by Brian Friel which gives the dialogue a lively Irish rhythm. If my ears don't deceive me, though,

there's an impish touch here. Jack Tarrant's baby-faced, bashfully grinning Aleksey - the tutor who bags the heart of both the bored, discontented Natalya and her young ward and unwittingly turns the household upside down before doing a hunk - is played as a Scot. Anomalous, yet psychologically convincing: it is, after all, traditional wisdom that a Scots accent could sell you anything. The critic James Agate once wrote that all that is necessary for success with *A Month in the Country* is the absence of a star actor and the refusal of the company to sus-

THEATRE

A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRE
STRATFORD

pend animation when the leading character speaks. Well, Michael Attenborough's production meets both those criteria - in the first instance rather disappointingly for those with memories of Helen Mirren matchlessly mercurial Natalya. But this unevenly cast production suggests there is another essential requirement - the ensemble should

have quirky personality in depth. Much the most striking performance comes from Lloyd Hutchinson, who bares the teeth of bogus chortling jollity to hilarious effects as the low-born doctor driven to clowning for the nobles as a way of concealing his contempt for them.

Prepared to sell Natalya's ward into a grotesque marriage for three horses and a wagoette, Hutchinson's quack radiates a seedy cheerfulness, as though being able to smile in the face of his moral squalor was a mark in his favour. As Vera, the young ward successively traduced by

Natalya, the tutor and the doctor, Catherine Walker is also impressive, offering a heart-catching study in blighted innocence. Too many other characters are either under- or over-played, like Jayne Ashbourne's ex-cruciatingly pert servant.

As Natalya, Sara Stewart is a vision of creamy-skinned, gorgeously dressed loveliness, with a line in languid brow-cocking irony and transparent manipulativeness. True to Turgenev's understanding of human inconsistency, she can keep us guessing from one moment to the next whether she will react with spite-

fulness, orsolicitude. Thanks to this, the scene where Natalya sounds out her ward's feelings towards the tutor comes over like a dry run for the even greater scene in *Uncle Vanya* between Yelena and Sonia.

Ms Stewart never convinced me that she had genuinely fallen in love with Aleksey, so the ineffable mix in the character of play acting and sincere distress lacks a vital component. An engrossing production, but a patchy one.

PAUL TAYLOR

Booking: 01789 295623



Jack Tarrant and Catherine Walker as Aleksey and Vera

The bitch has backed off

SANDRA BERNHARD stalks around SoHo's gargantuan make-up emporium Sephora after two hours of signing her book *Moy I Kiss You On The Lips, Miss Sandra?*. A blonde woman tells her to look around for anything she wants, darling.

Jo Bernhard passes through the crowds pressing Shiseido powder and Clarins lippliner to their wrists - as her new book's cover art emphasises, Bernhard's own lips are to lipstick as Stevie Nicks's eyes are to tasselled shawls.

Sandra goes over to the Naturopathica section aisle and has a moment with the concept of evening primrose cream in a tiny jar for \$33. It's an expensive, natural, genteel product and, as such, bears resemblance to the new Sandra Bernhard. Once a lovely nasty, emaciated character actress (*The King of Comedy* and, more recently, her cult-favourite film and show *Without You, I'm Nothing*), Bernhard's odd fame arose from her dramatisations of desperation for fame. Now, a "centred" Bernhard closes her new

NEW YORK DIARY



ALISSA QUART

Broadway show, *I'm Still Here... Damn It!*, with the refrain "God is good". She even bit her tongue on a talk show when the host asked imbecilic questions about her "anger". What's changed? Is it her recent motherhood (in a classic New York scenario, *l'enfant* lives in its own studio upstairs from hers in the West Village)? While her 100-minute show is still the type of fare *The New York Times* finds outrageous (it seems New York's newspaper of record will call anything "edgy"), in truth Bernhard's latest act has as many edges as a

stick of designer incense. The comedienne cracks jokes about comedienne ("Isn't caller ID so passive-aggressive?") and makes hired help funnies about house painters and cab drivers. Bernhard also throws some models and Gianni Versace jokes into the mix. Think 1997.

Maybe Bernhard's show is kinder and more tired because she's no longer jooosing for stardom. Now she's insulated by it. Still, she could riff forever on the new meaning of the phrase "retro". After serving as an horrific from the mid-Seventies until last month, "retro" is suddenly being used as a derogatory term. As in the phrases, "Ugh, how retro!" or "Betrayal of the American public is really retro".

But would Bernhard's Broadway audience of grey hairs (albeit dyed various festive reds and expensive blondes) have chuckled at anything more grating than the gentler stuff she served them in her latest act? After all, they didn't laugh at her show's best joke, one where she imagined if the perfume cK one were a

person. It would be a throat-

slashing, sodomising rapist. All around New York, comedians are clamouring for the Bernhard mantle. Comedy's Razor's Edge, asking whether they are beautiful or monstrous and whether the audience is as virulently angry as they are. In dinky Off-Off Broadway clubs, the childre of Bernhard practise her cruel craft: a liberal arts grad who lovingly, horribly imitates the Eighties band The Dream Academy; a "post-feminist" singer with harsh words for her model (she's the real thing while Sandra's the phony); a leather-clad, self-proclaimed "bitch" who digs around in her pants for articles she will sneer at during her evening's performance. One mean-spirited prankster even released a CD entitled *Honukkah with Monica*.

Is the reconstructed Sandra composing any Lilith-like Hanukkah tunes this year? She's probably too busy lighting the last of the week's candles in a designer menorah, surrounded by her glummy pals, as you read this.

ARTS DIARY

DAVID LISTER

THOSE LIFETIME achievers are getting younger: There was a time when you had to have been performing in the Fifties, Sixties or the glam eod of the Seventies. But I gather that the Eurythmics are to get the special award at next year's Brits. And if they seem a little recent to have notched up a lifetime's achievement, there is at least the consolation that Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart will perform together in public for the first time in eight years at the ceremony. As an encouragement to Dave and Annie to stick it out this time, new figures on this year's earnings show the oldies wiping the floor with the younger upstarts. Top of the list are the Rolling Stones who earned \$200m from their world tour, more than four times as much as U2 in second place. Can't think why

Mick Jagger hasn't got a big grin all over his face.

THE CULTURE Secretary, Chris Smith, and the Arts Council chairman, Gerry Robinson, have made much of lottery grants going to the north and the importance of the arts in the north. It seems that by north they meant north London. The Prime Minister and the Culture Secretary both attended the opening of the new Sadler's Wells, along with the Arts Council chairman and secretary general. But the lottery-assisted reopening of the Manchester Royal Exchange theatre after the IRA bomb damage drew none of these luminaries. The Arts Council drama director, Anna Stapleton, and lottery arts director, Prue Skene, flew the

flag. Mr Blair and Mr Smith should try Manchester. You turn left at Islington High Street and head north.

ON THE subject of Sadler's Wells, it seems I am not alone in finding the seats uncomfortable. Mr Rufus Isaacs from Gerrards Cross, Bucks, has written in to say that only travelling economy on a jumbo jet equates. He adds: "The seats are far too narrow, the arm-rests inadequate, as is the legroom. I was constantly being kicked in the back by the person behind". But apart from that, Mr Isaacs, how did you enjoy the show?

CRONYISM DOES have its drawbacks. After announcing the Arts Council grants on Thursday, thereby making

sworn enemies of dozens of companies from the RSC downwards, the Council chairman, Gerry Robinson, muttered: "People say I got this job because I've been friendly to the Labour Party. If they reward their friends by asking them to sort out the Arts Council, they soon won't have any left".

SIR DAVID Spedding, head of M16, has invited Dame Judi Dench for Christmas lunch, so that M of the Bood films and her real-life counterpart, C, can swap thoughts. But they won't learn much. Dame Judi doesn't write her script, and Sir David will surely adopt a different persona for lunch with an actress than that familiar to his agents. But it's comforting to know that the head of M16 is a groupie at heart.

Some people ask, can you really hear the difference? But then, some people let their mum choose their clothes.

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Hark the herald angels whinge

So did your favourite modern authors enjoy their pudding and crackers? Pull the other one, writes Jeremy Lewis

In December 1958, Philip Larkin wrote, festive as ever: "What an awful time of year this is! Just as one is feeling that if one can just hold on, it just won't get any worse, then all this Christmas idiosyncrasy upon one like a slavering Niagara of nonsense".

Despite Dickens' best endeavours ("That man must be a misanthrope indeed, in whose breast something like a jovial feeling is not roused by the recurrence of Christmas") the Season of Good Will seems to have an equal and opposite effect on many literary folk, who have a way of articulating feelings (often unwelcome) common to us all.

"Christmas is upon us. Oh Lord preserve us," sighs the diarist Frances Partridge, while Stephen Spender sagely observes that "This part of winter becomes every year more like a dark tunnel one enters about 15 December, not to emerge until after New Year". Widespread sentiments, it seems, in the republic of letters, the citizens of which grudgingly push typewriters aside to partake in last-minute present-huys, gorging themselves rigid, affecting paroxysms of pleasure and surprise, trying to be kind to dull or unwanted relations, and seeking oblivion via the bottle.

Christmas 1959 was, for Frances Partridge, "as usual a gruelling endurance test for almost everyone - except the children, who moved like ecstatic ghosts among mountains of parcels, toys, books, television sets and Belmain fur coats". One of the side-effects of wartime shortages had been to simplify the business of buying presents. In 1941, Vita Sackville-West gave Harold Nicolson an alarm-clock which failed to go off, and he spent the rest of the day "sitting indoors feeling rotten".

Lunching with the formidable dame Una Pope-Hennessy on Christmas Day two years later, James Lees-Milne gave his hostess, her two sons and Nancy Mitford a small bar of soap each, shaped like a lemon. The Dame reciprocated with a honeycomb, while Nancy Mitford chipped in with an egg and "an ounce of real farm butter". Thirty years on, staying with the Droghedas, Lees-Milne found himself caught up in a more familiar routine of "effusive thanks, cries of gush as we unpack expensive parcels which we don't always want, much over-eating of too rich foods".

One of the dangers of inviting writers to lunch is that the world may end up learning about the stinginess of the presents on offer and the horrors of the cooking. Cyril Connolly and his pantherine second wife, Barbara Skelton, spent Christmas Day 1953 with Ian and Ann Fleming in Kent. Their host, Barbara noted, had "lost any semblance of good



looks, a bottle-necked figure with a large bum". Famously greedy, Connolly liked to be known as a gourmet, but although much had been promised from the Flemings' new cooks, the best they could provide was "rancid stuffing for the turkey and bottled chipolatas", and handy hutter made with synthetic cream. After lunch, presents were handed round. The year before Fleming had given Barbara a "used pencil, a used lighter and a dirty motto", but this time he stretched to a pair of black lace underpants and a "hideous beige galoshes bag". A fellow-guest and former lover, Peter

Quennell, came up with the same Henry James novel he'd given her 10 years before. On the way home, the Connollys' car run out of petrol, and the embattled couple stamped angrily off in opposite directions. Equally unfavourable accounts of seasonal festivities are provided by Connolly's friend and tormentor, Evelyn Waugh. "We managed to collect a number of trashy and costly toys for the stockings," he wrote in 1945, and although the plum pudding was tasteless, "by keeping the children in bed for long periods we managed to have a tolerable day". The following year, "I made a fair

show of gentility throughout the day, though the spectacle of a litter of shoddy toys and half-eaten sweets sickened me." Lunch was "cold and poorly cooked", and Waugh spent the remainder of a "ghastly day" comparing the published version of *The Diary of a Nobody* with that serialised in *Punch* - an improvement on Harold Nicolson's 1940 Christmas diet of government memoranda. "We got tight and I recited Newbolt's poems, firing off a toy pistol as a 'turn' at the local Yuletide Dance at the Beach Hotel in Littlehampton. Alcoholic remorse set in after-

wards," John Betjeman confessed in 1931. Booze looms large in literary Christmases, both as antidote and as agent provocateur. In Yugoslavia in 1944, Waugh condescended to drink cocktails "with a group of proletarian officers". Anthony Powell's Christmas Day diary entries read like vintner's lists ("Tristram gave me a bottle of Nuits St Georges '65; Archie, Moulins Graciere Grand Poujeaux (Medoc) '79). No doubt drinks had been taken when Barbara rounded on "Hubby" chez the Betjemans ("My god, you are a bore with your shrub talk all the time!"), or when Lees-Milne

spotted Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon bickering over drinks after the Christmas service in St George's Chapel, Windsor ("Then I shall have to walk home by myself"). Few of our modern diarists put in an appearance at church, though Barbara Skelton went along one year with Mrs Lea the charwoman and complained that "the turning of the wafer into Christ's body and the port wine into blood took an interminable time." Staying with Lord David Cecil and his family, Frances Partridge tried instead to "bring my mind to bear on an article on Wittgenstein", but the Cecils

wouldn't stop talking for an instant. Dislike of Christmas in general was as familiar to the mid-Victorians as it is today. Edmund Gosse's father abominated Christmas, declaring it to be nothing more than Popish nonsense, and when his son confessed he had been lured into the servants' quarters and offered an illicit slice of Christmas pudding ("Oh! Papa, Papa, I have eaten of flesh offered to idols"), the old gentleman rushed into the kitchen, laid hands on the offending object and buried it deep in a compost heap. Few of our modern Christmas-haters quite come up to that.

Heroes and villains of 1998

After a hyperactive year in books, *The Literator* is seeing stars - and turkeys

HEROES

Stuart Proffitt

When ordered from on high to drop Chris Patten's book on Hong Kong, he resigned from HarperCollins in one of the highest profile departures since Michael Heseltine stalked out of the Cabinet. As Proffitt defended his author, every last vestige of the non-Murdoch media were joined in battle. To them, Patten was a brave defender of free speech standing up to Murdoch's evil empire. Dozens of authors and agents offered soundbites to the effect that they would never again deal with HarperCollins. With one or two exceptions, it was soon business as usual as various individuals claimed to have been "misquoted".

Tim Waterstone

Having sold his chair to WH Smith, the founder bought it back via HMV in a £300m deal: the highest ever in British book retailing. Despite this summer's British opening of Borders, it remains, for discerning buyers, the chain of choice.

Ted Hughes

The Poet Laureate surprised everyone with *Birthday Letters*, a reflection on his years with Sylvia Plath that looks all the more poignant with his passing. Just as he maintained a dignified silence against those who charged him with driving his estranged wife to her death, so he declined to play the sympathy card by sharing with the public the fact that he had cancer. *Birthday Letters* and his previous volume *Tales from Ovid* picked up all the major poetry prizes.



Beryl Bainbridge

Yet again the bridesmaid, the author of *Mister George* bore her fifth failure to win the Booker with dignity and humour, even as everyone agreed that Ian McEwan had won with a novel very far from his best.

Buster

The dog once accused of GBH in St James's Park proved his rehabilitation by "writing" what everyone agreed was a nifty piece of doggerel about The Man, aka Roy Hattersley.

Stephen King

In his first tour for 17 years, the multimillion-selling author worked his butt off at sell-out events. At signings he made time for everyone, chatting, inscribing messages as requested and even phoning one woman's husband - despite the enormous queues. At the year's highest launch party, for *Bag of Bones*, he sang and played guitar with Ken Follet's band *Damn Right I Got the Blues*. King may be one of the world's biggest selling authors, but he may also be the world's most unassuming.



Magnus Mills

The man who proved that bus drivers can go all the way when his debut *The Restraint of Beasts* made it on to the Booker and Whitbread shortlists.

Louis de Bernières

Named Author of the Year, the creator of *Captain Correll's Mandolin* continued to enjoy his long run in the charts while remaining unchanged by success. The Queen's Dragon Guards dropout spent years odd-jobbing before embarking on a literary career. A word-of-mouth success, *Shunned* by all the major prizes, *Correll's* has doubled its sales in the past 12 months, to 700,000 copies in Britain alone. A film is in train.

Sir Edward Heath

For simply - finally - finishing those memoirs.

VILLAINS

Stuart Proffitt

Just as Michael Heseltine's resignation was not merely about helicopters, so Proffitt's was not merely about Chris Patten. Impartial critics noted this



Mike O'Mara

For brokering the Morton/Lewinsky deal and then justifying their collaboration by citing a shared love of T S Eliot.

Frederick Forsyth and Lord Lloyd-Webber

Two of the world's most overweening ambitions announced they were joining forces to produce a sequel to *Phantom of the Opera*. The deal was brokered by Ed Victor, Britain's most egocentric literary agent (and, according to a survey, our third most popular party guest).

Bertelsmann

Like a thief in the night, the German media conglomerate stole in to buy Random House from St Newhouse. Many agents and authors bewailed the fact that, however benign the Bertelsmann management, publishing was becoming ever more homogenised with power in fewer and fewer hands.

Andrew Morton

As though he hadn't helped to dish enough dirt already, Morton signed a deal with publishers Michael O'Mara to collaborate with Monica Lewinsky on her memoirs.



Penny Junor

In writing *Charles: Victim or Villain?*, the journalist whose toadying oeuvre includes biographies of Richard Burton and John Major presumably hoped to help with the heir's rehabilitation. Sadly, the move backfired and even Vinnie Jones entered the fray when he and Junor were guests of Libby Purves on *Midweek*. When a US interviewer said that HRR had no one to confide in, Junor allegedly countered "He's got me!". The first rule of journalism? Protect your sources!

Criminal neglect

IMAGINE A gathering of gifted professionals - the finest a business can boast, assembled to honour their peers at an annual awards ceremony. Then imagine that the leading guest at such a glitzy bash used his spotlight role to tell the company that he really couldn't be bothered with their work. That he never spent much time enjoying their skills - except when the BBC paid him to study an example of it. Now, if you were a dedicated toiler in this trade, wouldn't you feel more than a mite aggrieved?

Yet that was just how Michael Mansfield QC addressed last week's Dagger Awards of the Crime Writers Association at the Law Society. The TV-friendly campaigning silk told the massed virtuosi of thrillers and whodunnits that he seldom had time to read them - save when he talked about John Grisham on the radio. Puzzlingly, he then segued into a sort of anti-Pinocchet ramble that left the great British sounding less like a star advocate than the only pinko cabbie in the known universe.

Mansfield is missing a treat - especially if, as I hear, he may have some crime-writing ambitions of his own. No sector of British fiction looks as vital and varied at present as crime and mystery, in all its forms. At least two finalists for the 1998 CWA/Macmillan Gold Dagger for fiction - Michael Dibdin's *A Long Finish* and Reginald Hill's *On Beulah Height* - would have graced any Booker shortlist on purely literary grounds. In the event, the top prize went

A WEEK IN BOOKS



BOYD TONKIN

The Supercilious Silk, and the Bashful Benefactor: two Christmas mysteries

to a formidable transatlantic contender: James Lee Burke's *Sunset Limited* (Orion), the latest in the Louisiana-based series featuring Inspector Dave Robicheaux, lauded by Pete Davies in the *Independent* as "the most impressive body of crime fiction in America today".

No matter. However good crime writing gets, some supercilious celeb can always look down his nose at the best in the business. This is not just snobish, but senseless as well. Any half-awake watcher of the publishing scene knows that the big story of the new millennium will involve the collapse of those already frayed distinctions between so-called "genre" and "literary" fictions. The best crime writers stand well in the vanguard of that convergence. Yet still they have to grin and bear the

casual contempt of the smart Establishment. It's enough to drive a noir buff to dream up a retributive plot-line. "Death in the Red Chambers", anyone?

COURTING DISSENT, the CWA gave its award for non-fiction to *Cries Unheard* (Macmillan): Gitta Sereny's fierce, forensic quest for the links between what was done to little Mary Bell and what she did to the two boys she killed. Sereny's book may come into contention again when the first-ever judging panel for the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction convenes early next spring. It is funded, Orange-Prize-style, by a nameless bashful bookworm ("a retired British businessman and philanthropist") to the tune of £30,000 for the winner and £2,500 each of the shortlisted authors. With a shortlist due in March, a shortlist in May and a winner proclaimed by its first chair - James Naughtie - at the start of June, the Samuel Johnson will fill the yawning gap left last year when fickle NCR abandoned their non-fiction award. Its creation gives a Christmas boost to aspiring travellers, biographers, memoirists, critics and scientists - and to their publishers. Knowing Naughtie's own proclivities, musical biographers might feel most chuffed. As for the Johnson monicker - well, it would be very churlish to dig up Sam's own definition of a patron: "Commonly a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery". Perhaps that explains the anonymity.

Still with horn
dark day
crypt
A
Ordering bo
Christmas
is easy. You
remember o

Still rocking with the old horror show

In these dark days, what could be more fun than a tale from the crypt? Philip Hoare disinters Gothic chic

At the dying-down of the year, as trees become skeletal and berries turn blood-red against viridian ivies, as grey fogs wreath the tallest city blocks, the thoughts of a Northern European aesthete naturally turn to matters Gothic. This festive season, latter-day Goths have a new tome with which to console their dark thoughts. Richard Davenport-Hines's book dissects the cadaver of the Gothic imagination. From the 17th-century eruption of Vesuvius which remade the landscape in a Gothic image and sowed the seeds for the visceral paintings of Salvador Rosa, to *The Cure*, David Lynch, and the dummies of the Chapman Brothers, Davenport-Hines's book deftly cites painting, literature, film and pop culture to define the sensibility. Morbidly relevant in our *fin-de-siècle*, Gothic artifice looms large in the imagination as we toy with our own decadence.

Gothic, of course, is all about the transposition of the real into the artificial. For all its Central European aura, it is a very English sensibility. Our country is riddled with its spirit, in such sites as the ruins of Melbury Abbey outside Southampton. By the 18th century, mature trees grew out of the roofless nave of this dissolved Cistercian house, inspiring Horace Walpole and Thomas Gray to hymn its sublime charms. Jane Austen came too, along with her impressionable niece Fanny.

Fanny's breathless, bosom-heaving reaction to the waterside abbey echoed that of Catherine Morland, heroine of Austen's Gothic pastiche, *Northanger Abbey*: "Never was there anything in the known world like compared to that compound of everything that is striking, ancient and majestic that we were struck dumb with admiration, and I wish I could write anything that would come near to the sublimity of it, but that is utterly impossible as nothing I could say would give you a distant idea of its extreme beauty." She was not alone in her admiration. One aficionado of Gothic was so taken with the abbey that he had the entire north transept demolished and rebuilt as an "authentic" folly in the grounds of his country house.

Netley is a perfect example of the Gothic mania that hit England in the



Gothic: four hundred years of excess, horror, evil and ruin
by Richard Davenport-Hines
Fourth Estate, £20, 438pp

wake of Mrs Radcliffe's pulp-fiction shockers. Seekers of the sublime arrived in their droves, hotels were set up nearby, and the whole thing became a theme park, complete with torchlit tours of the ruins to thrill young maidens in thin muslin. With their morbid tastes and anti-social hours, these Goths were an Enlightenment-spawned version of 1970s punks, and Netley Abbey their equivalent of a night club.

There was (and is) a degree of vulgarity involved in Gothic. After all, the 18th-century's most flamboyant goth, William Beckford, was a man of trade, employing the gains of commerce to build Fonthill Abbey and its soaring tower – the tallest in the country for all of the few short years it stood before its gerrymade structure collapsed in a heap of rubble. Beckford's Fonthill was filled with more effects than a Lloyd Webber stage show. One Christmas, Lord Nelson was greeted by a drive lined with flaming torches and admitted by dwarves into a cathedral-like space where hidden lamps produced startling lighting effects.

You can still find traces of Beckford's follies at Fonthill in deepest Wiltshire. With its giant lake, and enormous boulders sunken into the bosky grounds, it is an artificial Wagnerian landscape. One almost expects Ludwig II of Bavaria to come punting along in a giant swan.

The Gothic buildings of the 18th century evinced a reactionary, atavistic and coded political desire to affirm the feudal past. By the time

the radical campaigner William Cobbett had embarked on his famous *Rural Rides*, Gothic was decidedly the province of new money. In 1821, Cobbett encountered a certain Mr Montague's estate in north Hampshire: "Of all the ridiculous things I ever saw in my life this place is the most ridiculous", he wrote. "The house looks like a sort of church... with crosses on the tops of different parts of the pile... in one of the gravel walks, we had to pass under a gothic arch, with a cross on the top of it... this gothic arch, disfigured by the hand of old Father Time, was composed of Scotch fir wood, as rotten as a pear, nailed together in such a way as to make the thing appear, from a distance, like the remnant of a ruin! I wonder how long this sickly, childish taste is to remain?"

For another two centuries, at least. As a reaction against the rationalism of the Enlightenment, Gothic was a thing undead, constantly revived like the vampire count himself. Ahead of Cobbett was the great 19th-century explosion of Gothic: Pugin's enthusiastic incarnation of Victorian Gothic, an industrialised, decorative style, was echoed more darkly in the works of Bram Stoker, Edgar Allan Poe and Robert Louis Stevenson.

As Davenport-Hines points out, Gothic has much to do with the sense of human isolation, the individual against the rest. Where the 18th-century Goths had reacted against rationalism, their heirs reacted against the machine, and the machine of a controlling society. In this aspect Gothic allied with the artifice of late 19th-century Decadence – the dandy's "recreation of self as manufactured object", in Susan Sontag's formulation – and paved the way for its pop-cultural assimilation in the modern era.

Nowhere is this more evident than in America, a country which has spent the 20th century rooted in the 19th but trying to live in the 21st. Having given us Poe, the horror movie, and the great Southern Gothic fiction of Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor, America has now evolved a mall-friendly Gothic of *Nightmare on Elm Street* remakes and Tim Burton's films (and books). Modern American Gothic is a reaction against fundamentalism (which in turn reacts against it) and the ther-



Mall-style Gothic: Freddy Krueger in 'A Nightmare on Elm Street 3'

Palace Pictures

apy culture which has produced contagious tales of alien abduction (themselves foretold in Fuseli's nightmare paintings). Davenport-Hines cites Mark Edmundson's book *Nightmare on Main Street* (Harvard), with its "provocative section on recovered memory syndrome as a gothic melodrama".

Once in this cultural frame, it is tempting to construe almost anything as Gothic: from William Keot's authentically Gothic act of planting a dead tree in Kensington Gardens, to the willing carpet of flowers placed there 200 years later in honour of a dead princess. The Gothic imagination can draw a line between child-abuse cases and *The Wicker Man*; it can conjure up the true demons of the modern era.

After all, this is an age which reached its nadir with Nazi Gothic to a Wagnerian soundtrack where Mervyn Peake's neo-romantic Gothic, infected with madness and his death-camp drawings from Belsen, mirrored a century which began with the Armageddon of the Great

War and threatened to end in a millennial version of Vesuvius's plumed explosion: the shadow of the Bomb.

Back in Netley, the abbey's medieval Gothic was supplanted by the Victorian Gothic of a military hospital and asylum. A quarter-mile long, it became the new focus for a more terrible Gothic spirit, a place where shell-shocked men were filmed in juddering black and white like a German Expressionist movie.

Tyranny, genocide, mechanised warfare: we who have lived under these shadows must have expected to see Gothic galvanised anew. Gothic is a logical response to an apocalyptic era, from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to Joy Division's tortured extremes and the suicide of their singer, Ian Curtis. He incarnated what Michael Bracewell terms "Northern Gothic", with Branwen Brontë and the witches of Pendle.

Gothic's dark river runs through our culture. From Derek Jarman's gay Gothic – his Catholic-obsessed films and dark cavelike central London flat with its heavy medieval fur-

niture – to Anthony Hopkins's muzzled face in *Silence of the Lambs*, the modern appetite for its dark excesses is undiminished. Witness the revival of *The Exorcist*; the popularity of *The X-Files*, or the shock-Gothic of Marilyn Manson.

We need these correctives to the bland Blairite, confessional Clintonite, world of self-improvement. I once had to lecture in Lincoln, Nebraska, the heart of a wide-open prairie where one would expect no hint of perverse Gothicism. Yet the teenage boy whose room I had been given turned out to be an obsessive fan of Martin Degville of Sigue Sigue Sputnik: as cynical an exercise in 1980s pop-Gothic as you could get.

Later that trip, I ended up in the film director John Waters's house in Baltimore, a redbrick pile in the middle of American suburbia. I was greeted by Waters in his hall, standing next to an electric chair. My fellow diners resembled a glamorous Addams Family, and the guest bedrooms were decorated with paintings of Disney characters done by

a serial killer. "It means no-one stays more than one night," said Waters, wrinkling his moustache.

In the attic, alongside a collection of rusty Victorian surgical equipment, was a threadbare rocking horse. I'd swear it had only just stopped rocking as we came into the room. But perhaps I was doomed to a Gothic imagination since receiving my education in a Catholic college occupying Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill. My room was lapped by the lawns that surrounded Walpole's turrets and towers, and his weird Chapel in the Woods.

In the late 1990s, the Gothic imagination persists in British art. The Sensation show was full of it: from Hirst's pickles to Ron Mueck's "Dead Dad", Cathy de Monchaux's sculptures ooze feminine Gothic horror in their reference to the vagina dentata. BritArt seems as obsessed with sex and death as the decadent art of two previous *fin-de-siècles*. As we enter the next millennium, Gothic's well-preserved corpse has been snatched again.

Time for our poets to make the best of a bard job

New year, new Poet Laureate? Bill Greenwell imagines how some of the main contenders might want to apply for the post

Carol Ann Duffy

"Queen Time"

Butt of wine. Guineas. The sound of sabres rattling like teeth in the cut glass by the bed. You love the clunk of the funeral bell, flat, as you answer the coded call. Ode. Dirge. Epithalamium. Your voice cracks like plaster when the tall orders arrive on the same day while the rest watch telly. Princess Anne, or is it BT's answering service? The Abbey?

Visit. Assassin. Bishop. You have the guts to garter the knights, to slice open their visors as if they were hiding pearls. The last rites. The Charity Shield, the sweet FA. You dash a brocade of words to a fax, and you leave the new Pursuivant gasping. Your country looks fast-forward to a past where the present timestrains. I need the work, boss. I want the sack.

Andrew Motion

"In Quiet Confidence"

The telephone rings. It is the palace – no, the prime minister. His voice bright as an old spark. And I must confess I have been half-expecting him to write.

and I know, and he knows, and Ladbroke's knows what line is being quietly plied. I think he is inviting me to choose to step in those open brogues. On parade.

So I answer, half-scrambling my words, in a jittery sequence, a series of whispers which sound like time-clocks or goat's beard in a light breeze just before vespers –

So I tell him, which I will, you know, what my decision is. Yes, that's correct. I know exactly what I have to do.



Benjamin Zephaniah D Swanborough

and he explains what titles to expect.

I've been the odds-on-favourite, and will not blench at it, nor take offence, when offered, though I may say Shit Is that all right? I'll have to do it once.

Benjamin Zephaniah

"Me laureate poem"

Dis a Laureate rantin for de royal occasion
Mean de people no feget bout de Norman invasion
Bout de Queen an her mudder an her Phillip mista
An nu feget de vista of her Caribbean sista
An de way de doubled-barrel kill de old King Harold
Wid de old King Johnnies in dere robes apparelled
Yu can't feget de Jameses and de Williams and de Georges
Cause Inglan mek dere history an it sound so gorgeous
Yu don't need fe believe it long as hands be clappin
But now dey need to listen to me riddim and me rapping
Need fe rock wid me when I'm poet by appointment
De bee what mek new jelly for de Queen's own ointment

I don't need nu sceptre nu de orb an all de baubles
Me chant bout Brixton an Handsworth an de Gorbals
You tink bout de truth an de whole disgrace an favour
When dey mek me de Reggae Roots Royal Dub Raver

Wendy Cope

"Laureates And Their Boring Manifestoes"

I've offered to be the Laureate – I think it would be a breeze. There are lots of things to be sorry at, But I'm fond of royalties.

Bill Greenwell writes a weekly topical poem for the "New Statesman". His book "Tony Blair Reminds Me of a Budgie" is available, price £5 from Entente Photo Here Press, PO Box 317, Exeter EX4 3SR

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PAPERBACKS

BY EMMA HAGESTADT AND CHRISTOPHER HIRST



W.B. Yeats: a life, vol. 1, the apprentice mage by R.F. Foster. Oxford, £15, 640pp

THE PROTEAN figure who emerges from Roy Foster's monumental, surprisingly amusing reassessment of W.B. Yeats is very much of our times: drug-taking (the preferred hashish to mescal), drawn to mysticism, we even see him with his lover shopping for a bed in the Tottenham Court Road. Though intimately involved with the decadent movement, this most ambitious of poets also played a key role in forging modern Ireland. A major strength of the book is its delineation of Yeats's personal relations – from his tangled love life to his admirably unequivocal support for Oscar Wilde. Foster is content to let the poetry, which he quotes generously, speak for itself.

Only the Lonely: the Roy Orbison story by Adam Clayton. Sonctuary, £12, 226pp

THE LIFE of the Big O was notoriously peppered with tragedy. And similar misfortune seems to be pursuing him beyond the grave, judging by this garbled biography. It is frequently impossible to fathom out what is going on, from early struggles ("This breath of stale air commenced a wrestling with vocational stimulus...") through success in England ("He was the sombre side of Freddy Garriy's coin") to the Travelling Wilbury's ("He was... a well-spring of kismet supercool"). From a self-penned biographical note, we learn that the author is also a singer, whose new album is his "artistic apotheosis". Good job too, if this is anything to go by.

Musical Anecdotes by Henry Kelly and John Foley. Hodder, £6.99, 328pp

WEIRDLY UNFUNNY, this trawl of hors d'oeuvres would be an ideal present for a musical nephew – as long as you never see him. Though it is interesting to learn the accuracy of the Mozart character in the film *Amadeus* – apparently the great man was "remarkably small (four foot, eleven inches), very thin and pale, with a profusion of fine, fair hair" – your appreciation of this book will depend on how amusing you find Sir Thomas Beecham's view of the trombone as an "antique drainage system" or the anonymous contribution "Why do violinists stand outside people's houses? Because they can't find the key and don't know when to come in." Ha!

Murder a Cigarette by Ralph Harris and Judith Hutton. Duckworth, £7.95, 147pp

ENTERING THE fog end of the debate, Lord Deedes (author of the book's preface), Lord Harris (Chairman of Forest) and Judith Hutton (a wartime Ministry of Information censor), muster up the usual libertarian answer to the anti-smoking "SS Brigade". Dismissing medical statistics on one page, and then marshalling them in their defence the next – though they do acknowledge that heavy smokers account for 90 per cent of deaths from lung cancer – the book's thesis boils down to that most uncontroversial of statistics: that most of us will be dead by 80 whether we smoke or not. More provocatively, the authors deny the dangers of "passive smoking" and the effect of smoke on newborn babies.

SPOKEN WORD FOR XMAS

BROWSING IN a bookshop is one of the best ways of solving tricky present problems, and now that most good bookshops have substantial offerings on audio Santa's life is even easier. Starting with the smalls, *Babe in the City* (HarperCollins, £6.99), Dick King-Smith's sequel to the hugely enjoyable *Babe* will be a treat – and prepare them for the film. For slightly older children (and their parents), Martin Cunes reading Jeremy Strong's *The Hundred Mile an Hour Dog* (Penguin, £7.99) will go down well. A Christmas must is Alan Bennett's plucky commonsensical reading of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (BBC, £8.99) his calm makes the matter-of-fact magic of the tale the more absurdly real. And look out for Ivory Shell's series of highly collectable classic children's stories from countries all round the world, available either in ordinary pictorial plastic cases or very attractive gold-lettered gift boxes, both at £6.99. I especially enjoyed the Egyptian and Aboriginal Tales.

Today's smart modern intimate prose works very well read aloud. Twenty- and thirty-something blokes and blodish wenches should enjoy Nick Hornby's *About a Boy* (HarperCollins, £8.99), read by Alan Cumming or his unabridged High Fidelity (Isis, £16.99) read by Nigel Carrington. The more romantically inclined could do no better than Louis de Bernières's unabridged *Captain Corcoran's* *Mandolin* (Chivers, £18.95), read by Michael Maloney or Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love* (Chivers, £15.95), read by David Threlfall. Or, for those perfect friendships, Casablanca and The Matinee Falcon (Mr Funch, £8.99), a re-release of the original 1943 wireless recording by Bogart and Bergman.

Timothy West has just completed his superb unabridged readings of Anthony Trollope's six political novels with *The Prime Minister* (Cover to Cover, £64.99) and *The Duke's Children* (Cover to Cover, £53.99); either of them would make welcome listening for conservative relations with a long haul home. Or else ensure easy gift decisions for the next five years by buying them Can You Forgive Her (£64.99), the first in the series. Another literary marathon that is written over the last 500 years. It ranges from Peppys and Evelyn to Captain Scott and Barbara Castle, with a galaxy of stars reading the extracts. They are arranged by time of the year rather than date, and the juxtapositions are often startling and thought-provoking. Finally, simple but special: *The Gospel According to St Luke* (Penguin, £8.99) in the King James version, read by David Suchet. And my own audiobook of the year: *Cover to Cover's* elegantly boxed, unabridged version of Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (£26.99), read by Sam Dastor, who gives a mastery presentation of the book's various and exotic cast.

If you have difficulty finding these titles near you, a sure way of getting them (and many more) sent to you is to contact London's Wigmore Street Talking Bookshop's mail order service on 0171 491 4117. They also do special offers on unabridged books, for example John Buchan's *Mr Standfast*, read by Edmund Dehn, reduced from £48.99 to £18.99.

CHRISTINA HARDYMENT



The Oxford Companion to the Mind edited by Richard L. Gregory. Oxford, £15.99, 856pp

DESPITE ITS encyclopaedia-like format, the quirkiness of the entries prevent this tome being too much like a text-book. The section on "Humour" quotes Wyndham Lewis that laughter is "the mind sneezing". The contributor of the idiosyncratic entry on R.D. Laing ("whence comes decisions about who can, must, cannot, must not do what to whom...") turns out to be one R.D.L. Though the book is weighted towards the editor's specialist field of visual perception (this essay on "illusion" even fills the fly-leaf), its scope ranges from "Laughing Gas" to "Paranormal", from "Turing, Alan" to "Out of Body Experience". For the price, this is a bargain.



The Safest Place by Fergus Linenhan. Pan, £6.99, 262pp

SET IN wartime Ireland, Fergus Linenhan's enjoyable second novel tells the story of a young man on the run. Sent to Dublin to assassinate a Special Branch detective, young Republican Eddie O'Sullivan spends his days in a hoarding house and his nights falling in love with Kay, a show singer at Dublin's Coliseum. But, after the deadly deed is done, Eddie is forced to flee into the cold winter countryside. Populating his novel with Judith Hearne-like splinters, penniless variety artists and war-mad schoolboys, film critic Linenhan (the author of *Under the Durian Tree*) knows the virtues of unfussy prose and old-fashioned storytelling.

Delusions and Discoveries by Benita Parry. Verso, £13, 274pp

MARRIED BY academic gobbledegook ("transcoding is a disjunctive process"), this critical work tackles the intriguing theme of Anglo-Indian fiction inspired by the Raj during its apogee from 1880-1930. Parry savages imaginative flesh-creepers by "irreproachable matrons" ("I myself have seen a handsome youth sacrificed to Kali, hied at the wrists and ankles and disembowelled," frothed Maude Diver). Parry is equally scathing about three more talented writers: "preposterous," "superficial," "irascible." Though Kipling is the best of a bad lot, she insists he viewed India "through ethnocentric lenses". Well, there's a surprise.

City Girl by Patricia Scanlan. Bantam, £7.99, 457pp

DEVIL, CAROLINE and Maggie, the three smiling-eyed heroines of Patricia Scanlan's Irish bestseller, follow a traditional route to the altar: fresh out of the convent, they get pregnant, lie in hot baths, leave Dublin for New York, and return home to marry loveable louts. Not nearly as entertaining a read as Marian Keyes – her younger and hipper competitor in the field – Scanlan's book fails to deliver either on sex or shopping, although she does have a nice line in gruesome car accidents. *The Grafton Street Benetton* is as glamorous as it gets, and suffice to say that all three girls are left to discover their innermost selves in aerobics and white wine.

BEST-SELLERS

Bill Bryson is the travel list this week taking the top five places with a combined sales total of 46,449. That's not nearly as many as *Delia*, which, though the TV screening of *Notes From a Big Country* early next year should send his sales up into the stratosphere. The strangehold of the big three – Bryson, Attenborough and Smith – on

the top of the non-fiction chart probably won't loosen until the last book token has been redeemed in the New Year. That said, is there anybody left in the country whose Christmas wish to improve their own culinary skills, or more likely, those of their nearest and dearest, still lacking That Cookbook? And for those sick of being told that

they can't even boil an egg, the resurgence in the sales of *Men Are From Mars...* suggests a pro-active approach to bucking the post-Christmas high in the number of people filing for divorce.

Compiled by Bookwatch from sales over seven days ending 13 December © Bookwatch Ltd, 1998

ORIGINAL FICTION

	TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	WEEKLY SALES	PRICE
1 (1)	Carpe Jugulum	Terry Pratchett (Doubleday)	10,609	£16.99
2 (2)	Tara Road	Maeve Binchy (Orion)	8,844	£16.99
3 (6)	Archangel	Robert Harris (Hutchinson)	6,926	£16.99
4 (-)	City Girl	Patricia Scanlan (Bantam)	6,781	£5.99
5 (4)	Point of Origin	Patricia D Cornwell (Little,Brown)	6,618	£16.99
6 (3)	Field of Thirteen	Dick Francis (M Joseph)	6,515	£16.99
7 (5)	Rainbow Six	Tom Clancy (M Joseph)	6,510	£16.99
8 (-)	Powerplays	Tom Clancy (Penguin)	4,599	£5.99
9 (7)	Charlotte Gray	Sebastian Faulks (Hutchinson)	4,556	£16.99
10 (10)	Bag of Bones	Stephen King (Hodder)	3,802	£16.99

ORIGINAL NON-FICTION

	TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	WEEKLY SALES	PRICE
1 (1)	Delia's How to Cook	Delia Smith (BBC)	64,247	£16.99
2 (2)	The Life of Birds	David Attenborough (BBC)	20,325	£18.99
3 (3)	Note From a Big Country	Bill Bryson (Doubleday)	18,226	£16.99
4 (4)	Blackadder	Richard Curtis et al (M Joseph)	11,693	£15.99
5 (6)	The Little Book of Calm	Paul Wilson (Penguin)	10,559	£1.99
6 (7)	Little Book of Feng Shui	Lillian Too (Element)	9,266	£1.99
7 (8)	Addicted	Tony Adams/I Ridley (CollinsWillow)	8,232	£16.99
8 (5)	The Private Eye Annual	ed Ian Hislop (Private Eye)	8,199	£7.99
9 (-)	Men Are From Mars...	John Gray (Thorsons)	6,434	£8.99
10 (-)	Losing My Virginity	Richard Branson (Virgin)	6,432	£20

TRAVEL

	TITLE	AUTHOR/PUBLISHER	WEEKLY SALES	PRICE
1	Notes From a Big Country	Bill Bryson (Doubleday)	18,226	£16.99
2	A Walk in the Woods	Bill Bryson (Black Swan)	12,378	£6.99
3	Notes From a Small Island	Bill Bryson (Black Swan)	9,859	£6.99
4	Neither Here Nor There	Bill Bryson (Black Swan)	2,946	£6.99
5	The Lost Continent	Bill Bryson (Abacus)	2,040	£6.99
6	Strange Places...	John Simpson (Macmillan)	1,707	£20
7	Following the Equator with Peter Ustinov	M Waldman (Simon&Schuster)	1,110	£20
8	Round Ireland...	Tony Hawks (Ebury)	809	£9.99
9	The Plant Hunters	Toby Musgrave (Ward Lock)	610	£20
10	The Age of Kall	William Dalrymple (HarperCollins)	573	£19.99

Celebrity bust-ups, crime, sleaze... hot news in 1858

Dickens's mag traded on misery as well as merriment. By D J Taylor

I REGRET very much that I can't contribute to your projected *Magazine*, Thackeray wrote to George Cruikshank in 1853, declining an invitation to appear in the short-lived (two issues) *George Cruikshank's Magazine*, "but I am obliged to refuse all such applications, and have perhaps the project of launching some day a ship of my own, of wh. I shall be owner and captain." In the forward march of early-Victorian periodical journalism, the novelist and magazine proprietor were natural allies. Thackeray realised his ambition seven years later with the *Cornhill*, closely followed by Trollope's tenure at the *St Paul's*, but the tradition went back a quarter of a century to *Ainsworth's Magazine* and the 25-year-old Charles Dickens's appointment as editor of *Bentley's Miscellany*.

Inevitably, given his complete domination of the early-Victorian literary world, it was Dickens who proved the most successful – and the most innovative – of this tribe of novelist-editors. *Household Words*, founded in 1850 and selling for twopenny to a newly literate and print-hungry readership, was one of the great triumphs of mid-century journalism. With a peak circulation of 40,000 copies a week, it made a healthy £2,000 a year in profits, divided between Dickens and the magazine's co-proprietors Bradbury & Evans.

At the same time, it played a crucial part in cementing the alliance between the novelist and a horde of middle-class readers. "Conducted by Charles Dickens" (the masthead legend) meant exactly that. Dickens calculated that he read 900 unsolicited manuscripts in the editorial chair, and a bibliographical sub-industry has grown up around the countless pieces on which he collaborated or otherwise improved to produce the true "Dickensian" flavour. As Michael Slater points out in his introduction to



The Dent Uniform Edition of Dickens' Journalism, vol. III: "Gone Astray" and other papers from *Household Words*. Michael Slater (editor). Dent, £30, 542pp

Gone Astray, many readers believed that Dickens wrote most of the magazine himself.

The third volume of this epic edition of Dickens's journalism brings together nearly all the pieces that he wrote for *Household Words* in the eight-and-a-half years of the magazine's existence. As ever (even the briefest glance at a biography of Dickens has this effect) one notes both the indefatigability – these, after all, were the years of *Black House*, *Hard Times*, *Little Dorrit* and much else – and the range of interests: politics (outrage at the conduct of the Crimean War); social reportage ("Betting-Shops", "A Nightly Scene in London"); pet projects such as the "Home for Homeless Women" established under the auspices of his friend Angela Burdett-Coutts (a pretty grim place, judging from the regulations); momentary bugbears (a sparkling causerie on "The Best Authority" notes that "at a dinner of 18 persons I have known 17 sit next to him").

It would be surprising if much of this material didn't fall into the category of what Kingsley Amis used to call "chips from the novelist's workbench", yet the effect is rarely uniform and the movement is in both directions. "Unsettled Neighbourhood" invokes the

spirit of *Dombey and Son*, written several years before, to examine the imprint of the railways on the area around King's Cross. The strictures on the Crimean War anticipate the attacks on governmental bungling and bureaucracy of *Little Dorrit*, while the warm, reminiscent vein of "Our School" is directly connected to the autobiographical sections of *David Copperfield*.

Leaving aside straightforward autobiography, Dickens's personal life seeps into these 65 essays like dye. Much of this is routine: even the greatest writers are conscious that one of the best ways to fill space is to write about yourself. "Our Watling Place" describes the Dickens family's French hideaway near Boulogne, while "Out of the Season" is a marvellously atmospheric account of three days spent at Dover in spring 1856 trying (and failing) to get on with *Little Dorrit*. By the late 1850s, as the clouds gathered above his private life and he began the affair with Ellen Ternan that led to the break-up of his marriage, the roots of this urge to advertise himself seem much more complex. "The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices", a carefully disguised rehash of the trip that he took with Wilkie Collins to Cumbria in 1857 (and which included a meeting with Ellen) is full of gestures to some sort of intense but unexplained personal emotion.

It is a kind of code which Dickens knew that none of his readers would be able to decipher, but nonetheless satisfied his own faintly masochistic need for disclosure.

Both marriage and magazine ended within a year of each other. Dickens had intended that "Personal" – the extraordinary public proclamation of his "domestic troubles" – should appear simultaneously in *Punch*, also owned by Bradbury & Evans, but the editor Mark Lemon demurred and

was backed up by his proprietors. Legal action followed, after which Dickens bought the title himself, closed it down, and re-opened for business as *All The Year Round*.

Without labouring the life/art connection, the tone of many later sections of *Gone Astray* seems intimately connected to this mounting crisis. A chronic relentlessness, a deep unease, characterised the smallest thing that he did: stranded in Dover, for instance, and unable to write, his solution was to take himself for a 20-mile walk. It spills over into his writing, which seems almost a form of nervous release – particularly when he gets onto one of his fixations, such as prison clergymen who claimed to detect repentance in convicted murderers.

The demands of weekly journalism were another aspect of the terrific, self-imposed pressure with which Dickens invested his life, but they were also a kind of safety valve, a letting-off of steam which would otherwise have been expended elsewhere, at God knows what personal cost.

Endlessly revealing of early Victorian society choc-full of the moral outrage that one expects of the man and his age, *Gone Astray* also brings off a less predictable trick. It leaves the reader with the queer feeling that, along with the inept bureaucrats and the public scandals, Dickens is busy exposing the no less fascinating spectacle of himself.

D J Taylor's biography of Thackeray will be published by Chatto & Windus in 1999

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A bit of chicken-wire, a length of ribbon and a skilful way with apples can transform your decorations. By Anna Pavord



In a grown-up Santa's grotto in Mayfair, Paul Thomas adds the finishing touches to one of his Christmas creations

Kalpesh Lathigra

Deck the halls with amaryllis

I have just bought some new ribbon, which entails a massive shift in decorative style this Christmas. The children, whose eyes, after any absence, flick over the house like federal agents, checking that everything is in place, will not miss this daring innovation. They will notice that the old ribbon has moved on to trim the hacket of the Christmas tree. And that the new ribbon is decorating some circular swags that they have never seen before. Oh shock! Oh horror! Will they ever recover?

It all started with some circular plastic rings filled with Oasis that a friend saved from a wedding and passed on to me. It's sad to have such a reputation as a junk junkie, but there we are. It's too late to fight it now. These rings are about 18in across, with the Oasis packed into a 2-in-thick band round the outside. They were originally used flat, as table centres. In their new life they will be hung, wreath-like, against the walls of the dining-room.

The only wreath we generally have at Christmas is the one that hangs on the back door - sprigs of holly jammed into a round, crumpled sausage of chicken wire. The Oasis rings give a firmer, flat-backed base to build on and I've used ivy rather

than holly for the greenery. You need both at Christmas, but ivy is so much more forgiving to work with than holly. It is at its best now, with the fine, triangular leaves topped with dark bunches of berries.

Once all the foliage is firmly jammed in place, decoration can be a matter of whatever you have to hand. I like proper glass baubles, because the surface reflects the light more crisply and brightly than plastic ones can ever do. The wreaths look better with clusters of small baubles than they do with big ones. But you could use fir cones, sprayed silver (left plain they disappear into the background), sprays of hips from roses such as 'Kiftgate', allium or leek heads sprayed and frosted, or gilded and hunched walnuts. There are not many occasions when I could in all seriousness burnish a walnut, but Christmas does funny things to us all.

The ribbon was to give the finishing touch to the wreaths which are to hang in the hall. When I was buying it, I meant to tie it in a bow at the top and let the ends hang down in two (I hoped) elegant fishtails, high enough for the cat not to swing on, low enough to cover some dodgy bits of wall, which is what had given me the idea of the wreath-disguisers in the first place.

By the time I got home, I thought instead that I would try binding the ribbon loosely round and round the wreath. It didn't work. I needed wire-edged ribbon, not the soft stuff I had got. Even in my Christmas-befuddled state, it wasn't worth a 300-mile round trip to VV Rouleaux.

Life's not like that if you are a professional florist. Paul Thomas has a flower shop like a grown-up Santa's grotto in Mayfair. It's tiny, with a

way up from the mouth of the vase to touch the hunches of dried flowers hanging upside down from the ceiling. Brilliant amaryllis were ringed round the rim of the vase, with sprigs of blue larkspur pushed into the gaps. Ethereal see-through baubles hung from the willow, like vast soap bubbles caught in its branches. "That's the whole point," said Paul. "Unilever Soap Bubbles. They own that famous painting,

top. Not being selfish about his secrets, he shows, step by step, how you can make these creations at home. And if you've never wielded a stub wire in your life, this book is a real revelation.

If I wanted to pile an urn high with apples (and I do, I do), I would simply heap them up until they began to fall down. The disadvantage of this approach is that you can't build a very high pile. And the pile is very

come in. You push one horizontally across the base of each apple so that you can twist both ends of the wire together, giving the apple what looks like a long, thin stem. The wire makes it easy to fix the apples to the chicken-wire. Work in layers round and round the urn, from the base upwards.

Before you get to the top, tip a well watered spider plant out of its pot, wrap the rootball in black plastic and cut away enough of the chicken-wire at the top of the dome to ram the wrapped rootball firmly into place as a topknot. Then finish fixing the apples and push bits of moss into any gaps between them. I'm planning to use clematites instead. The colour is warmer and the fruit makes the urn more Christmassy.

I've missed out the bit that really divides professionals such as Mr Thomas from muddlers like me. He had covered the plastic urn with moss - real moss. "Oh, just stick it on with a glue gun," he said airily. But that's what they always used to say on *Blue Peter* and there never seemed to be any "just" about it. My moss will be crawling with woodlice and heaving with damp. It's not what they are used to in Mayfair. But I'm going to try anyway. Obviously, the mossing needs to be done before the rest of the work starts.

What with urns and indoor wreaths, Christmas is becoming dangerously innovative. The whole point of it, as far as the children are concerned, is that each year should be exactly the same as the year before. It took years to wear them off paper chains. Making them used to be their first job when the Christmas holidays started.

I myself always found them curiously depressing: memories of church halls and WI socials. The children did not share this antipathy and spewed out paper chains with manic ferocity. Fixing them when all your plaster is soft lime and horsehair is a problem. We never got through a Christmas day without a chain breaking loose and draping itself dismally over the cake.

But while they were paper chain fetishists, I was at the start of an antipathetic addiction to candles, which continues still. Candles are great allies. In their mendacious light, nobody can see all the things you haven't done in your preparations for the great day. Happy Christmas.

'The Art of Floral Design' features floral decorations by Paul Thomas (Ward Lock, £20). Paul Thomas's flower shop, The Greenery, is at 4 Shepherd Street, Mayfair, London W1Y 7LN (0171-499 6889)

'Arrangements' is far too wooden a word. These are creations. Happenings. Theatre. I loved them. Especially one that showed a plastic urn, covered in moss, then piled high with green apples

narrow path winding towards the counter between buckets of pink amaryllis, gilded twisty willow, sacks of fir cones and outrageously butch roses. When I arrived, he was building a miraculous decoration (one of many) for the chairman of Unilever's Christmas party.

The container was a tall, frosted glass vase, shaped like the galvanised French flower-buckets that interior designers use as a passport to the land of Style. Silvered twisty willow wound its contorted

Boy in a velvet suit... "It was shaming that he had to spell it out, but he did it very kindly.

I'd gone there because of a new book, *The Art of Floral Design*, which features his flower arrangements. In fact, "arrangements" is far too wooden a word. These are creations. Happenings. Theatre. I loved them. Especially one that showed a plastic urn (not a very big one), covered in moss, then piled high with green apples. A spider plant made a quirky pineapple-like finial on the

unsteady. "Oh!" responded Mr Thomas with horror. "I couldn't risk a collapse like that at Claridges."

So this is how you do it. You half-fill the urn with gravel, to stop it toppling over top-heavily. You ram a dome of crumpled chicken wire on top of the urn (the shape is important, as this is the underpinning for the final form) and wire it firmly into place. Then you pack loose sphagnum moss (florists call it sack moss) into the chicken wire.

This is where the stub wires

CUTTINGS

NEWS FROM THE GARDENER'S WORLD

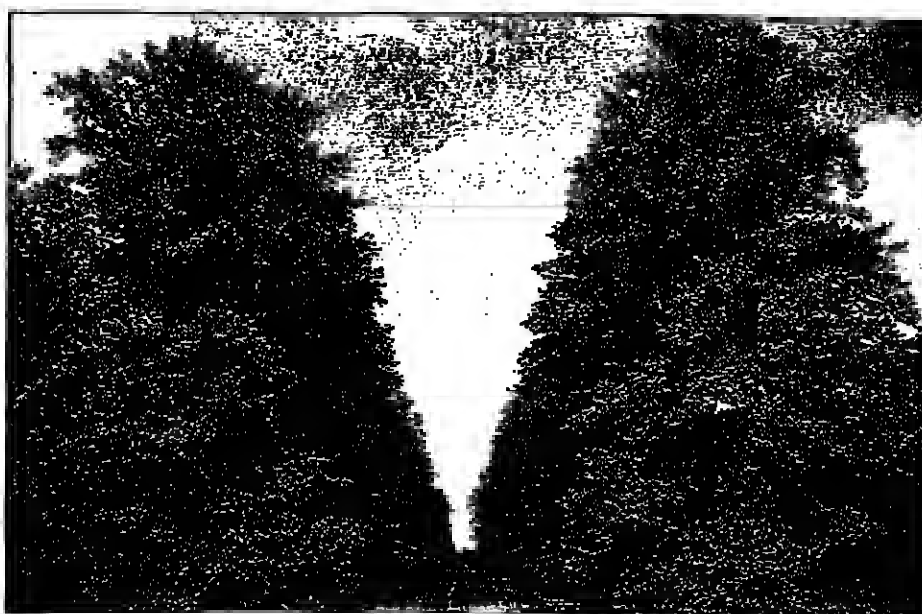
IN THE latest edition of *Tree News*, the seed specialist Dr Andrew Gordon analyses the available statistics on broad-leaved trees planted in Britain since the 1960s. He concludes that between 70 and 85 per cent of the broad-leaved trees planted in this country are of foreign origin and finds that the majority of British nurseries rely on trees grown from imported seed.

Does this matter? Yes, it does. In the same issue, Dr Richard Worrell of Edinburgh University compares the survival and growth in Britain of trees of native and foreign origin. He shows that many native British trees grown from continental seed are less well-adapted to British growing conditions than British natives grown from British collected seed. Growth is less robust and the survival rate is poorer. For most species, in most areas, Dr Worrell concludes that the best trees will be of British origin, and that biodiversity is best served by planting trees raised

from seed gathered from a region close to the planting site. Free copies of *Tree News* are available from the Tree Council at 51 Catherine Place, London SW1E 6DY (0171-828 9928).

IS IT necessary for the gardener to be at odds with nature, asks garden designer John Brookes. In his latest book, *The New Garden* (Dorling Kindersley £16.99), he shows how gardens should be "of their place", each responding to local climate, soil, flora, fauna and cultural traditions. By "new", he does not mean a garden made on virgin territory. Rather, he is encouraging us to look at gardens in a new way: use local materials in their construction, instead of ubiquitous concrete pavers, and work with prevailing conditions instead of against them.

That kind of dictatorial dominance never makes for a comfortable garden. The book is based on a series of case histories, with plans and plantings taken from



Trees grown from foreign seed are less well-adapted to Britain A-Z Botanical

gardens all over the world. They include woodland gardens, wetland gardens, dryland gardens, Mediterranean gardens. Find the best match for your own situation and learn from a master of understated style.

CHILDREN (WITH an adult in tow) will be admitted free to Kew Gardens this weekend for a series of special Christmas events. Father Christmas is making an appearance, there are horse-drawn omnibus rides along the Broad Walk and

choirs at the Victoria Gate Visitor Centre. Added to the delicious scent of mahonias and flowering viburnums will be the smell of mulled wine and hot chestnuts. For further information about all events, phone 0181-332 5907.

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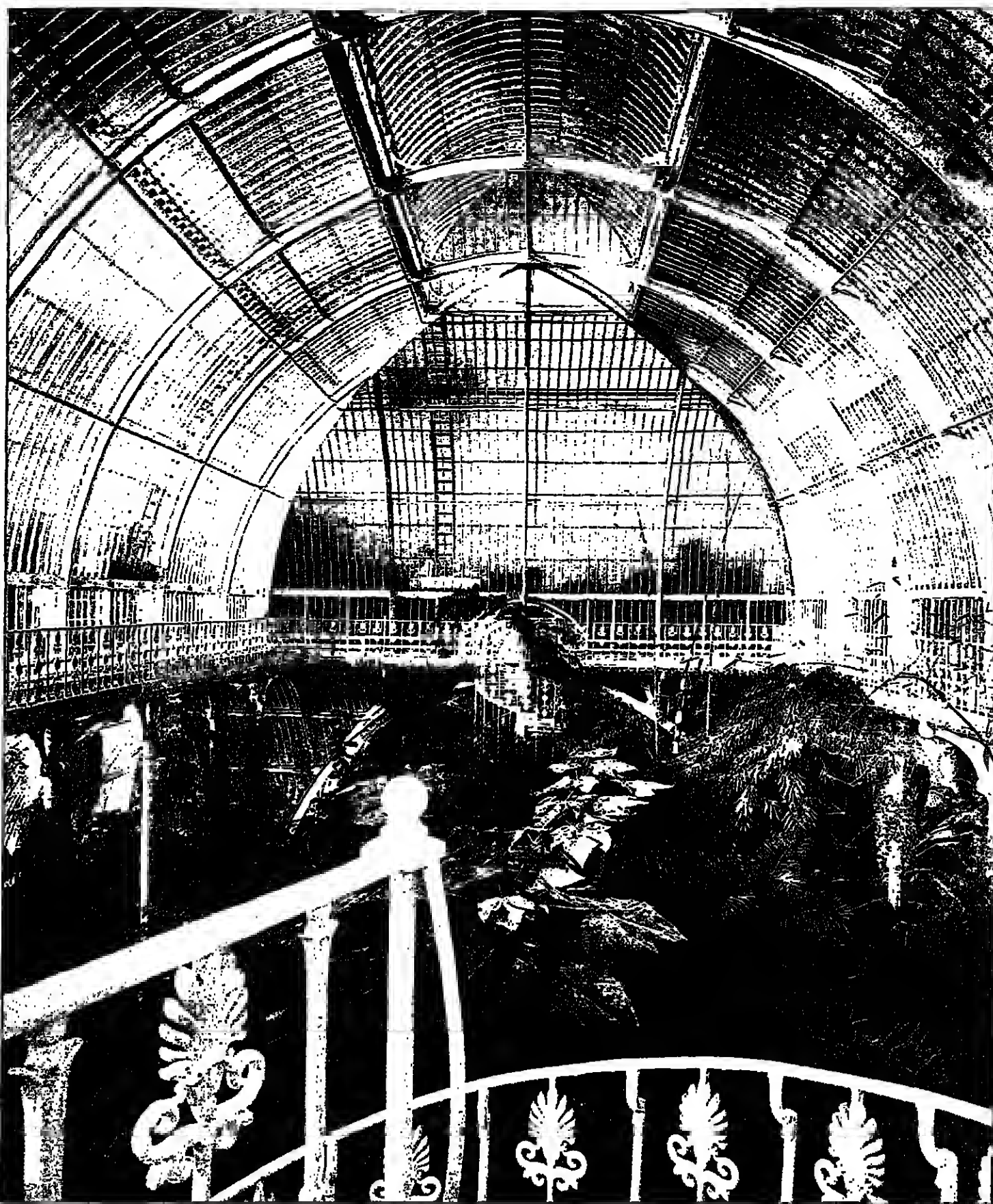
A hundred places of solitude

To experience a sense of ersatz ownership, visit one of the many gardens that remain open over the Christmas season. By Ursula Buchan

There's nothing quite like a large, empty garden that you can pretend is all your own. And winter is the best time for such dreams. One of the best aspects of working as a professional gardener was the chance to do "glasshouse weekend duty". This consisted of unlocking the glasshouses, watering the plants in pots, checking the heating and ventilation, damping down the tiled floors to increase humidity, removing dead leaves from plants. It could be hard work in the summer at least, but it had ample compensations. Having the Palm House at Kew to myself on a sunny Saturday morning before the visitors were allowed in, or disturbing a covey of partridges on the Rock Garden at Wisley very early on a foggy November day, were experiences I should not want to have missed. I felt grateful for the - mainly unearned - privilege of having a large and famous garden practically to myself. I could pretend that it was my responsibility, mine to redesign, renovate, change and even, possibly improve as I liked. I never felt the same creative urge on any other day. Occasional weekend duties were compulsory, and still are no doubt, because greenhouse plants need tending seven days a week. But there was one duty, that of Christmas Day, that was purely voluntary. Always anxious to get home to my family, I never put my name forward for this, and now I rather regret it. I had a student friend at Kew,

however, who used to volunteer for the duty each year. It meant a slightly heavier pay packet, of course, but I think he, like me, rather enjoyed the solitude and the sense of ersatz ownership. I recall him telling me that when he had spare time, he would wander round the gardens counting the flowers that were out. If December has seen few frosts, it is surprising how much will be flowering over Christmas: Rhododendron 'Christmas Cheer' perhaps, *Helleborus niger* in warm districts, and almost everywhere *Viburnum x bodnantense* and *V. farreri*, *Iris unguicularis*, and, of course, winter jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*). But there will be more which are refugees from other seasons, whose impulse to flower has been triggered by climatic factors, not day length: a bearded iris or two, a climbing rose perhaps, the odd herbaceous geranium, heart's ease, and polyanthus. Of course, gardens in the favoured south-west will boast the greatest number of flowers but, even in my cold garden, I would bet on finding 15 or 20 plants flowering at Christmas time. There are plenty of gardens open at this time of year where the theory can be tested. Botanic gardens, such as Kew, Cambridge, Birmingham, Liverpool, Dublin, Glasgow and Edinburgh have very generous opening arrangements, sometimes shut only on Christmas Day itself, but there are also other parks and gardens all over the British Isles that are open in daylight hours through-

out the year. These depend on the honesty of visitors to put their entry money in a box, their sense to keep dogs under control, and their sensitivity to realise that winter is often the time when large gardens have to be renovated, so borders may be empty, paths roped off, and trees repaired or cut down. Ideally, the would-be winter garden visitor will have to hand a copy of the very useful National Trust leaflet, "Places to Visit in Winter" (write to The National Trust, PO Box 39, Bromley, Kent BR1 3XL, enclosing a first-class stamp), together with The Good Gardens Guide 1999, edited by Peter King (Bloomsbury, £14.99). Each entry in the guide includes a telephone number, so that you can check the December opening times. The wonderful thing about this guide, now in its 10th year, is its objectivity. The editor depends on a whole army of inspectors to look round the featured gardens each year, but the enterprise is not sponsored by any commercial concern. The 1999 guide includes 100 new gardens, with only a few of the old ones having fallen by the wayside. It also has a highly subjective, but nevertheless invaluable star system to alert the reader to the best gardens. It makes an excellent Christmas present and may just spur you to visit a garden you have not seen at this time of year before. If you are in luck, you will have the place to yourself, and can pretend that it is all yours. If not, well, you can always count the flowers.



The Palm House at Kew Gardens has generous opening times

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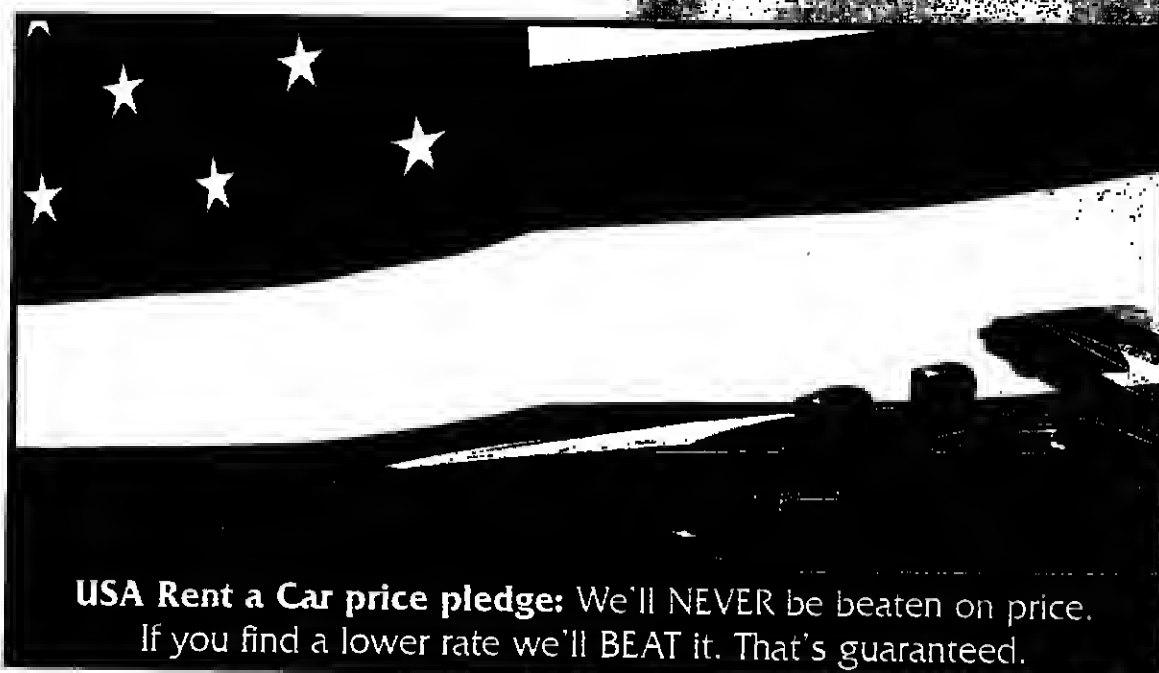
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The British love affair with Val

Early snow, amazing views – just what is it that makes Val d'Isère such a uniquely popular ski resort? Stephen Wood finds out

The early-season skiing was excellent in Val d'Isère this year. The week before last, I skied down the D902, the old Alpine road from Bourg St Maurice, in France, to the Italian border. Soon afterwards, I skied across a car park. I suspect that, later in the day, I traversed the proving ground used for Europe's biggest four-wheel-drive motor show. But it was hard to tell when the whole area was covered with 80cm of snow.

The snow usually comes early to Val d'Isère, allowing it to open for business on the last weekend in November and to stage the first race in skiing's World Cup in mid-December. By tradition, the British come early, too: last season, almost one in three skiers in the resort in December were Britons. And those who were there at the beginning of this month enjoyed good snow conditions, empty pistes and blue skies. The only downside, apart from the fact that about half the ski area had not yet opened, was a hitingly cold wind.

But we like "Val" enough to go there throughout the season: the statistics show that only the French, with 51 per cent, make up a bigger share of its market than the British, who constitute 27 per cent, making it the most popular skiing resort in the world for British skiers (the statistics also suggest that you are unlikely to meet many Poles, Turks or South Africans on the slopes: those nationalities have, respectively, a 0.3 per cent, 0.2 per cent and 0.1 per cent share of the market).

So just what is so attractive about the resort? First, the Espace Killy ski area – which Val shares with the neighbouring resort of Tignes – is absolutely huge (more than 100 ski lifts, 300km of pistes), dramatically beautiful and high enough for reliable snow cover, and its skiing "is so varied and demanding that it has raised a whole genre of international experts who never ski anywhere else", according to the *Good Skiing Guide*. Second, the reputation of the night life is such that ski operators have a hard time persuading their chalet staff to work

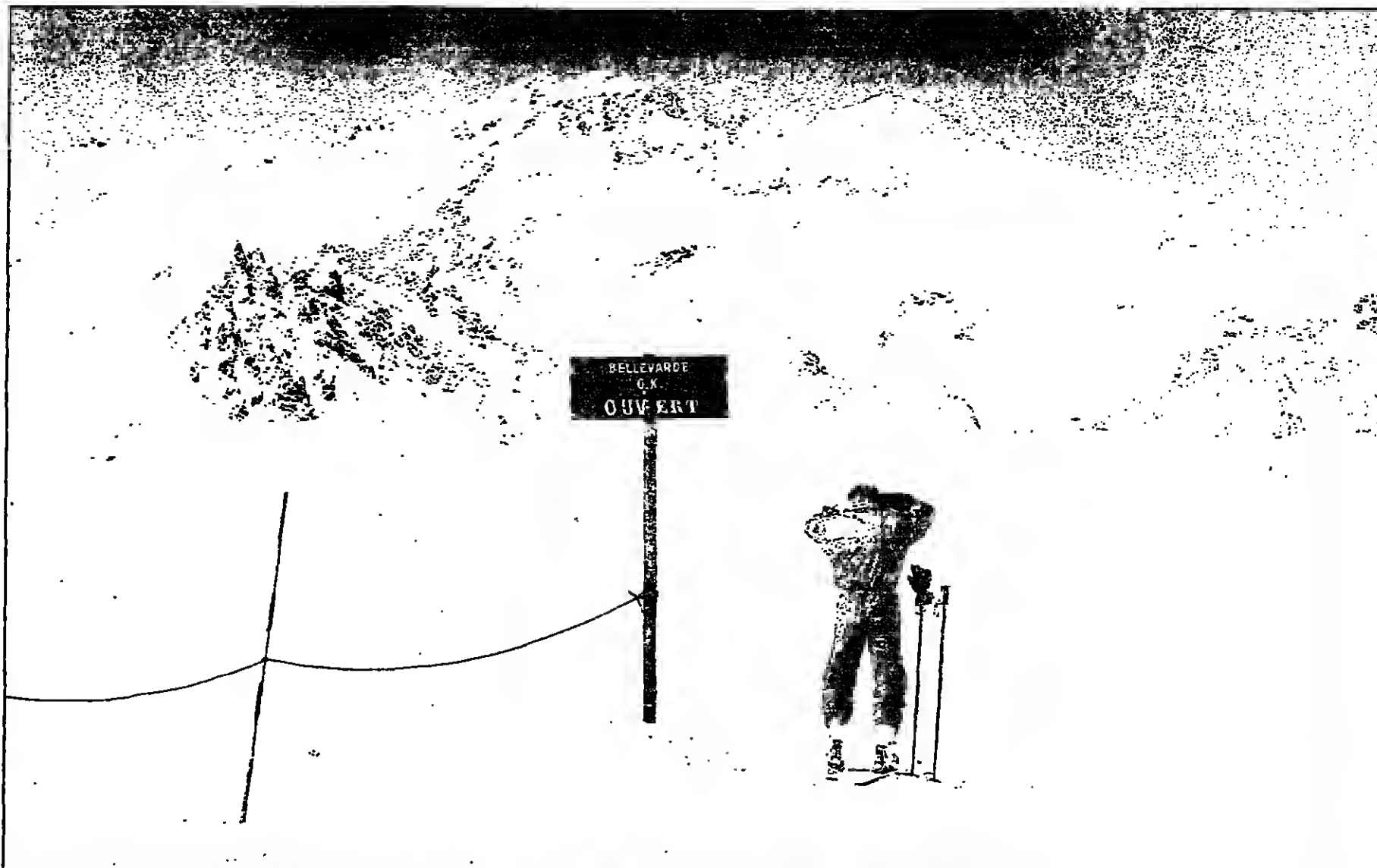
anywhere else. Finally, the resort has managed to maintain its chic image despite operating on an almost industrial scale, coping with more than a quarter of a million skier-weeks per season.

The image is unwarranted, as anyone who has been to Val – or watched BBC's *War and Piste* docu-soap – will know. The night life could well be exceptional, but I took up skiing too late in life to see the point in standing in a crowded nightclub drinking expensive brands of beer and being deafened by hardcore snowboarder music. Which just leaves the skiing.

The top of the resort is absolutely sensational: the view of La Grande Motte is one of the great Alpine panoramas, an immense sweep of mountains across the Isère valley to the north-east. Wait at the top for those who have travelled with you in the cable-car to disperse, and you can ski alone into a landscape which almost matches the Vallée Blanche in its epic scale. And at the bottom, there is a superbly varied black run down to the resort – called Face, it was created as the downhill course for the 1992 Olympics – which drops off the Bellevarde peak into a gully, then winds down to traverse a lumpy snow-field, and finally hurtles into the trees on a steep, icy slope.

But between the two is a ski-area whose attractions are largely technical: wide, fast pistes and plenty of unpisted terrain set in a vast, treeless snow-field that straddles the four valleys that run down to the resort. For those who want to improve their carving turns or powder technique, it's perfect; for those who (like me) prefer to find adventure in the landscape, on runs which disappear into glades and gullies, it's rather dull. In that huge ski-area, I like two things: the immaculately finished post-modern interior of the café/restaurant at the top of the La Daille lift and the switchback ride on the Leschaux lift, which climbs out of one valley floor and drops down onto the next. The skiing leaves me cold.

Alarmed that, as apparently the only British skier who hasn't fallen for Val, I might be missing some-



Is that a car park over there? In Val d'Isère, the favourite resort of British skiers, early snowfalls conceal the humdrum

Peter Macdiarmid

thing, I consulted an old hand while I was there, Jason Grist, who worked in the resort for five years with the tour operator First Choice, isn't blind to its deficiencies: beginners, he says, "should be advised against coming – except for the night life. Although there are good nursery slopes in the Solaise area. I don't think it's a resort for people in their second or third week of skiing". He was much less sympathetic

about my skiing problem: for intermediates and experts, he reckons Val is "a paradise, particularly the off-piste Tour du Charvet" (too late: I spoke to him on my final evening in Val).

More helpfully, he believes that Val (he dislikes the nickname because it reflects the Sloaneys past) is misjudged, particularly by Britons – and not just because it is no longer the skiing playground of the British

middle-class: "Ten years ago, yes; now it's much less exclusive. Fundamentally, it's still a French mountain village: when I worked at La Daille we used to give stale bread from the chalets to an old guy to feed to les bêtes."

"And underneath Val d'Isère there remains a community of *Avallins*" – the local name for natives of the Isère valley – "with a surviving mountain culture."

Grist regrets that visiting Britons are so oriented towards skiing. "In a 'welcome' meeting at Club Med, guests are told about Alpine pursuits such as snowshoeing, mountain-walking and cross-country skiing, and maybe 20 per cent will take them up. British guests would have no interest at all."

His remedy for my disaffection with Val d'Isère was to go up to the Tour du Charvet with an *Avallin*

guide on my next visit. "I guarantee that you will discover five or six things that you didn't know about the area, and if you're lucky you'll see a flock of wood grouse."

That struck a chord: I went straight out and bought a proper map of the area, to investigate the old mountain village which lies beneath the surface of the ski resort. Which is how I know I skied down the D902 road.

MORE SKIING

Guide to the snow conditions in Europe and North America

PAGE 22

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FRAZZLED AND fed-up after a week of horribly haphazard travel, on Thursday evening I did what I have never done before: ask an airline how much extra it would cost to fly in business class. "That'll be £337", came the reply: in other words three times the price of my economy ticket from Athens to London. After climbing back on to my feet, I politely declined – and I was very glad that I did. Here's why.

Seat 31D was very comfortable – especially when combined with its neighbours 31E, F and G. And, if stretching out across four middle seats on this Boeing 747 doesn't satisfy my need for personal space, I needed look no further than rows 27 to 30 inclusive, all of which are equally vacant.

There are 426 seats on a Olympic Airways jumbo jet, but on Thursday night only 43 of them were occupied (more accurately, I counted only 43 passengers on board; some of us were occupying more than one seat). To look after us, there were two pilots, a flight engineer and a dozen members of cabin crew, not to mention 14 loos. I have a theory about why flight 265 was so sparsely populated, which I shall expound in a moment.

First, though: you know when you find it hard to leave a place? This week, that was how Santorini was for me. But this inertia had nothing to do with the haunting beauty of the Cycladean island in mid-winter. It was impossible to leave because on Wednesday morning Olympic Airways cancelled the flight to Athens.

Ah well, I thought as I settled down to get some work done while waiting for the next flight, at least it's a bright, clean airport. Then I got thrown out: Santorini's gleaming terminal closes between flights. By that stage, I was inured to inconvenience. Five out of the six Olympic Airways flights I took this week were late. The total number of explanations or apologies: one (two if you count the non-appearance of the flight from Santorini). And I have been on more waiting lists than a hypochondriac NHS patient.

Highlights from my thoroughly mangled schedule include the shortest time I have ever spent in any hotel, a flat four hours from check-in to check-out. No, it wasn't that sort



SIMON CALDER

Flying in Greece: I've been on more waiting lists than an NHS patient

of hotel: I had arrived in Athens 14 hours late, and had to get up at 3am to catch a 5am connection. This flight, inevitably, was itself delayed, so I could have stayed in bed longer. Eventually I unravelled the three-stage reason: first, there are no boarding gates at Athens airport, so everyone has to be bussed to the airport; next, Olympic schedules no fewer than five domestic departures for 5am; third, there appear to be only four buses.

We can only hope that the timekeeping at the 2004 Olympics in Athens is better than that of the national airline. Cronus, the Greek god of time, would not be amused.

The only flight that wasn't late actually managed to be five minutes early. Could this be because it was the only domestic sector on which Olympic faces competition – from Heraklion to Athens? An Air Greece plane had left 15 minutes earlier. The Olympic flight got off to a flying start, and overtook its rival over the Aegean.

To return to the 'Boeing Celeste', which left Athens a mere 70 minutes late. My theory about the on-board void is simple: in the past year, competition has boomed between Athens and London. Perhaps the missing passengers were aboard the carriers that managed to leave on time: British Airways, easyJet, Virgin Atlantic, plus a time-lazy new Greek airline, Cronus Air. A word of advice to Olympic: either upgrade your performance, or downsize your planes.

On a hike around the wide open spaces of the rear cabin, I got chatting to an Australian passenger, who wondered why Olympic had not chosen to offer us a treat: "They could have upgraded us all to business class".



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Art, spirituality and amazing guacamole: just three good reasons to escape to Santa Fe for the festive season. By Kari Herbert

Christmas in margaritaville

The spicy scent of pinon pine lay as thick on the senses as the snow piling up on the pavements. In the central plaza the adobe buildings squatted like great Christmas cakes; the walls the colour of marzipan, flat roofs with smooth royal icing and thousands of candles on top. Lining one side of the square were Pueblo and Navajo Indians, wrapped in colourful thick woven blankets. Seemingly impervious to the freezing temperature, they sat proudly with more blankets carpeting the ground in front, covered in an array of stunning handmade turquoise jewellery, carved fetishes and gourds.

I had gone to Santa Fe to escape the trials and tribulations of Christmas in the UK, and although I thought it would be a miracle to find a place in America that did not play tinned Christmas carols on loud speakers everywhere, I was willing to give it a shot.

I had also heard that Santa Fe was, "Like way out man. Plenty of fairies, but not the kind you stick on a Christmas tree. Anyway, can you imagine a Native American putting stockings out for Santa?" It all sounded very intriguing.

It was. The tiny capital of New Mexico is awash with art and spirituality. It is a wonderfully relaxed mix of a place that has evolved into a city of quite some extremes. The palaces of the rich and famous rest lazily in the foothills of the spectacular Sangre de Cristo mountains, overlooking the simplicity of the Native American reservations on the desert mesa below. This is a city in which you buy a newspaper in the street from a nuclear physicist who became disillusioned with his role in life, you hear Buddhists discussing philosophy over a Danish pastry and coffee in a French café, and see resident tarot readers in the most traditional of hotels.

And what of the festive season itself? This materialised into thousands of furokotos in Santa Fe. Tiny lanterns, simply constructed with candles and brown paper bags, lined windowsills, walls and pavements. Chilli ristras hung from beams on the adobe buildings, and coloured cornucopas decorated doors and porches - underlying the huge interest people have in food here.

I sank into the bewildering range of restaurants with an air of surrender. There was everything from sushi to Tex Mex. A gastronomic heaven. I had never watched a waiter make guacamole at the table - nor tasted anything like it. I had also never been sung to by a waitress before. For traditionalists a turkey dinner could be found, accepting that great succulent chilies were the essential accompaniments to the meal. It was basically Christmas with a twist, and a margarita.

I took a break from restaurants and threw myself into the slow current of Santa Fe's gift buying "frenzy". Laid-back would hardly seem an appropriate description. I fingered spurs and smoky leather saddlebags with a passing fascination, moved on to the gem shops selling everything from amethyst to fossilised mammoth tusks, and finally ended up languishing in a bookshop drinking coffee and listening to music that gave no indication of the time of year.

Yet Santa Fe's general air of lethargy, presumably induced by constant eating, would on occasion metamorphose into an atmosphere literally popping with excitement. I found myself being swept into a procession in the plaza as twilight fell, singing softly in Spanish and watching operatic pantomime devils dancing on roofs, refusing shelter to the Mary and Joseph who led the parade. The freezing night was warmed with the glow of hand-held candles and later with Irish coffee.

The art scene was not to be left out of the celebrations. On Christmas Eve, Canyon Road glittered with a fiery welcome. The Canyon Road walk is a modern tradition; a chance to wander through a haze of carols sung by the side of small bonfires lit in the road, and look in some of the 83 galleries that open their doors and serve warmed wine and punch to customers and gazers.

Making your way through the assorted revelry you get a strong sense of Santa Fe's unique flavour. There was a glorious mix of spirituality with people wearing strange combinations of clothes and trinkets: accessories of Tibetan prayer beads with dreamcatcher earrings; Saint Christopher necklaces and cowboy boots. Posters wallpapered notice boards promising fulfilment and self-growth by means of Goddess worship, re-birthing, Tantric meditation and line dancing.

I delved into the depths of my femininity at the Goddess workshop and became thoroughly scared, waiting for my inner Kali to come raging to the surface. So, I ended my Santa Fe experience not at a workshop for enlightenment, but at a bar at the end of Canyon Road listening to live jazz and drinking another of the legendary margaritas. Tables were cleared away as real-looking cowboys swung lonely through the doors, scrubbed clean and ready for a night's dancing with a "real lady". I managed to dip under the gaze of several beady eyes looking for lurve, after spying the array of polished spurs with trepidation, and I slipped out anonymously into the freezing night - only to be disappointed by the distinct lack of dusty mustangs tied up outside.

I arrived home with a taste for tequila, blue corn chips and chilli, and realised that I had hardly missed the fairy on top of the Christmas tree.

FACT FILE

Getting there: the most boring thing about Santa Fe is reaching it. The best arrival point is Albuquerque, a brisk hour's drive away.

There are no direct flights here from the UK; the least inconvenient route is from Gatwick or Manchester via Dallas-Fort Worth on American Airlines. If you want to get there by Christmas you can expect to take a circuitous route and/or pay a high fare. Things improve in the New Year; Flightbookers (0171-757 2000) has a fare of £313 return in January.

Where to stay: Accommodation in Santa Fe can be expensive,

particularly around Christmas. Santa Fe Motel is one of the cheapest (around £55 a night; 001 505 982 1039); Hotel Santa Fe is a fun adobe-style place to stay (around £70; 001 505 982 1200), or plump for one of the more expensive hotels like La Fonda de Santa Fe (001 505 982 5511) which has plenty of character.

More information: visit the New Mexico Department of Tourism on Old Santa Fe Trail, where they have a wide selection of material to browse through, or pick up one of the many free local newspapers and magazines that give details on events.



Santa Fe's adobe buildings - a mix of Pueblo Indian and Spanish-Moorish styles

Corbis

SOMETHING TO DECLARE

NEWS FROM THE TRAVEL WORLD

Trouble spots: responses in the travel industry to the Anglo-American air strikes against Iraq.

After the first air strike, the Foreign Office issued the following advice: "We advise against travel to Israel and the Occupied Territories. British nationals already there should await further advice".

For other countries in the region except Iraq, the FO says: "Following the allied military strike against Iraq on 16 December, British nationals contemplating travelling to Middle East and Gulf countries should stay in touch with developments and take sensible precautions. They are strongly advised to register with the British Embassy and to follow local advice issued by the Embassy and its Consular Warden".

For Iraq, the FO says simply that: "British nationals should not attempt to visit Iraq. We strongly advise any British nationals currently in Iraq to leave as soon as possible."

British Airways Holidays is not taking any bookings for travel before 31 January to the following countries: Cyprus, Egypt, Israel and the UAE. Its parent company, British Airways, is changing its schedules on flights to Tel Aviv and Kuwait for "operational reasons" - in order that aircraft crews do not have to make the normal stopover at these airports. Passengers booked to either destination who decide not to travel may get a full refund, in the form of a voucher for future travel on BA.

One of the airlines most involved in the Gulf region is Emirates, based in Dubai, which says: "Flights are continuing to operate normally, and we do not anticipate any disruption to services". The airline told *The Independent* that passengers who preferred not to travel because of the conflict can cancel without penalty.

For the latest Foreign Office travel advice, call 0171-238 4503, or BBCs Ceefax page 470, or on the Internet at www.fco.gov.uk

Bargain of the week: festive flyers can get from central London to Heathrow more cheaply and easily.

The Heathrow Express is, as has been noted in these pages before, by far the most expensive train in Britain. But the £10 flat fare becomes a bargain on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, when almost all other public transport closes down completely.

The last time I made the journey from central London to Britain's busiest airport at Christmas the cab cost £50, including a festive tip. This year, though, travellers to Heathrow can take advantage of a full service on the train from Paddington station, not far from the centre of London. Families are set to benefit the most; each fare-paying adult can take up to four under-16s free.

True or false: drunks are not allowed on Sydney Harbour Bridge

True. Motorists on the landmark bridge are subject to the New South

Wales blood-alcohol limit of 0.05 per cent. But pedestrians? Yes: anyone signing up for the new and extremely popular walk/climb over the beautiful arc is breathalysed, and those over the limit are refused permission to take part in the three-hour adventure. So don't swig a stiffener before you soar.

BridgeClimb, the company that runs the operation, imposes other safety standards. Participants must wear special "Bridgesuits", grey tracksuits designed to avoid distracting motorists' attention. Harnesses must be worn, and fastened to static lines on the structure of the 70-year-old bridge. And even though Kodak is a sponsor of BridgeClimb, cameras are not allowed - to avoid the risk that users could fall from the top of the 400ft structure while taking pictures of Sydney Harbour.

To sign up for the climb, call 00 61 2 9252 0077 or consult www.bridgeclimb.com, the company's website.

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NORWAY	Gelvi30%	Firm packed snow	20	30	14.12	0C Settled
SWITZERLAND	Saas Fee50%	Exc runs on glacier	10	150	12.12	5C Sunny
UNITED STATES	Stowe10%	Mainly firm packed	15	60	08.12	-3C Bright spots

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Visiting Cuba is like dipping into five centuries of history, the time that has elapsed since Christopher Columbus first came across the island. For various reasons Cuba has been the forgotten island in the Caribbean, caught in a time warp, known only for its political sensitivity and large cigars.

Yet Cuba is much more than this. Many of the towns and cities preserve their original colonial Spanish architecture - mansions, inner patios, squares, churches, cathedrals and old military fortresses are set in lush vegetation and rugged mountains with the sea providing a deep blue backdrop. The island also boasts a surprisingly



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colourful array of flowers, fruit and birdlife. Flights are with Monarch Airlines from and to London Gatwick flying into Varadero on Cuba's north coast with road transfers to Havana.

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150 من الامل

There's no need to burn out in Bunsen's home town

Mark Twain
tramped there,
and Turner
painted there.
Margaret
Campbell takes
childhood images
to Heidelberg

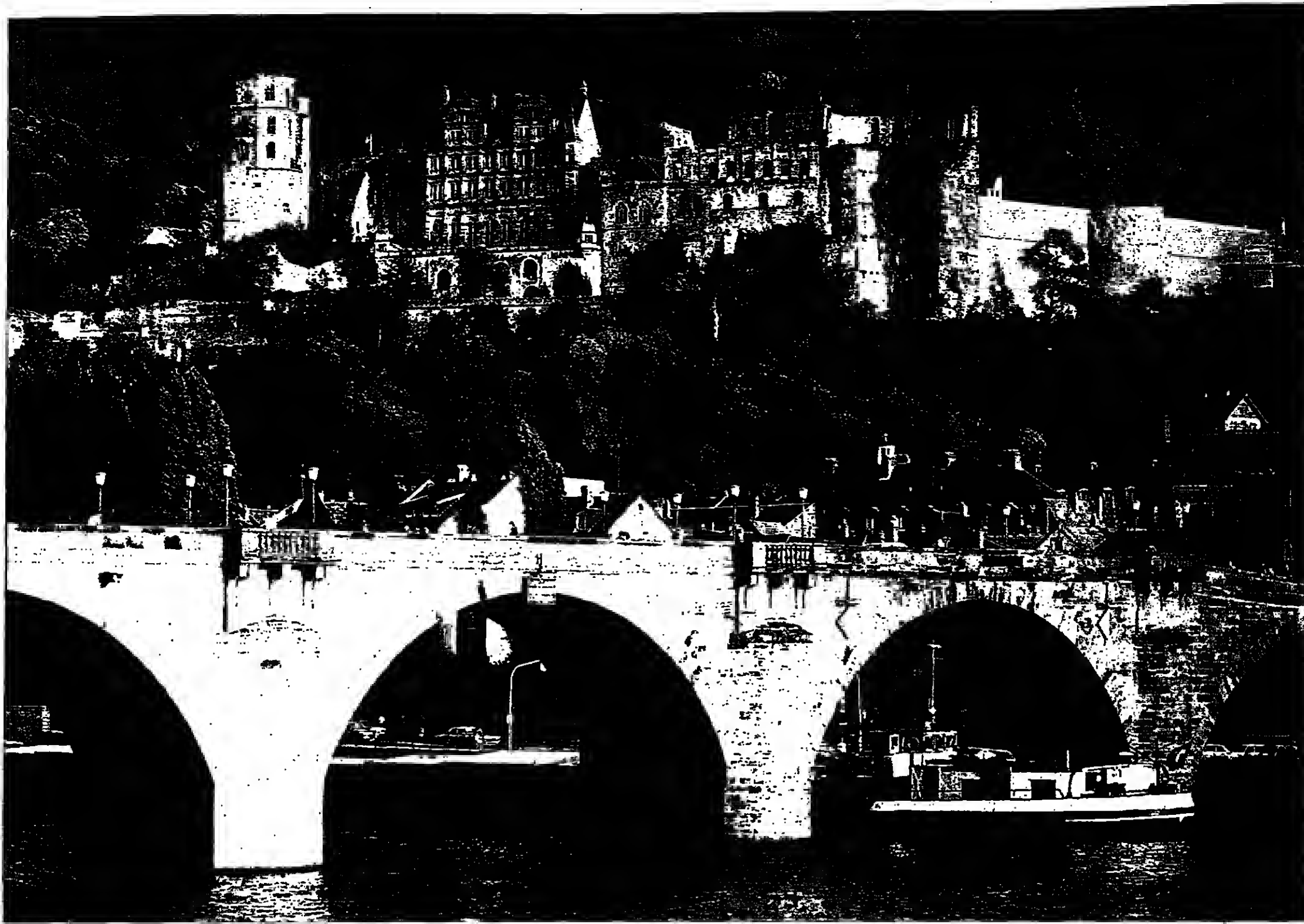
First impressions of a place can have strange origins: my picture of Heidelberg was formed through the viewfinder of a little plastic chalet, a souvenir brought back by family friends from their annual trip to Europe. Over the years, other layers were added to this childhood image of a ruined castle overlooking a river: the (rose-tinted?) memories of an older German friend who spent the Sixties there as a student; *A Tramp Abroad*, Mark Twain's account of his travels through Europe; David Lodge's portrait of post-war Heidelberg, divided between the victorious Americans

Part of the city's magic derives from the traditional and convivial student presence

and less prosperous locals, in *Out of the Shelter*.

Finally, years on from that first contact, I visited this celebrated town last month and realised again that some things are best experienced at first hand. Heidelberg really is breathtaking, particularly outside the summer season, when it is apparently overrun by tour buses and umbrella-waving guides. In any case, part of the city's magic derives from the mists that roll down over the hills, occasionally allowing a glimpse of their wooded banks, and from the traditional – and convivial – student presence.

There was no question about our first destination: we climbed the steep path to the castle, pausing regularly to wonder at the view beneath before passing through thick stone walls into the courtyard. It was hard to know where to look first: once home to the Palatine electors, the present structure has been added to many times since it was begun in the 15th century, and various architectural styles are juxtaposed with the ruins of an enormous fire in 1764. One of the most striking remains, an ornate Renaissance facade that serves as a backdrop to summer opera productions, reveals only sky behind the top two floors.



Heidelberg castle has been added to many times since it was begun in the 15th century, and various architectural styles are juxtaposed

Robert Harding Picture Library

The courtyard also houses an apothecary museum and the Heidelberg Fass, an enormous wine barrel made out of 130 oak trees in the 18th century and guarded by a statue of Perkeo, the heavy-drinking court jester who is reputed to have died after drinking a glass of water by mistake.

We could have spent hours exploring the castle interior and its museums, but were impatient to see the gardens and Elisabeth's Gate – an arched gateway allegedly built in a single night for James VI's daughter, who married Elector Friedrich in 1610. However, it was raining by now, so after a quick walk around, we visited one of Heidelberg's cafes, which almost deserve to be visited as attractions in their own right. A few slices of cheesecake later, and we were fit for more.

There has been a university here since 1386, making it Germany's oldest, and its buildings are scattered throughout the *Alte Stadt*. The most unusual has to be the *Studentenkarzer*, the dungeon for errant students (in the past, they were not subject to civil courts and could not be imprisoned in the town jail); the cell walls are covered in graffiti. The statue of Robert Bunsen brought back memories of school science labs, but this distinguished scientist was better known in his day for separating the colours of the spectrum.

Traditionally, the students were grouped into fraternities, with their own flags and rules of membership. Fencing skills were essential, and a fighting-scar was as much a rite of passage as a stay in the cells. The flags of the different fraternities, now existing more as optional social

clubs, flutter over the streets. Student taverns abound, the most noteworthy of which is the *Zum Roten Ochsen* (Hauptstrasse 217), where Bismarck and Mark Twain both ate. Much of Heidelberg was razed in the 1690s by invading French troops.

Among student fraternities, a fighting scar was a rite of passage – as was a stay in the cells

One of the few buildings to remain standing was the ornate *Haus zum Ritter*, also on Hauptstrasse. This fanciful edifice, topped by a statue of St George and whose facade is covered in Latin inscriptions, served as the town hall before becoming an

inn, still in business today. Opposite, the towering Gothic *Heiliggeistkirche* is a bit of a contrast. Once home to Germany's largest library, it was plundered during the Thirty Years War and its riches were transferred to the Vatican. Outside, the

buttresses contain little market stalls, at one time common outside large churches. It was too cloudy to climb to the bell tower, but on a clear day you can see all the way down the Neckar valley and even make out the Alps in the distance. Marktplatz,

between the church and the Rathaus, was formerly the site of public judgments, executions and humiliation (citizens could be placed in the *Triller*, a rotating cage, for minor offences up until 1740). And then we window-shopped along the (considerable) length of the pedestrianised Hauptstrasse and its narrow side-streets.

Next day, we crossed the river and walked up the *Schlangenberg* to *Philosophers' Way*, a charming walk that gives the best view of this apogee of German romanticism: steep forested hillsides, a swift course of water and the castle, inspiration for Turner and described by Twain as "the *Lear* of inanimate nature". The winding path back down the valley took us out on the riverside, and we stopped for a few minutes to try to distinguish where

the 18th-century ramparts of the Karl Theodor bridge (remember that chalet?) merged into the central pillars, reconstructed after the bridge had been damaged in the Second World War.

The Baroque towers and gateway leading back into the Old Town were also once used as cells. This constant reminder of criminality seemed at odds with Heidelberg's history as a centre for theology (Martin Luther came here to defend his doctrines, and the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 became one of the textbooks of Calvinism).

And I even saw some plastic chalets for sale – but sent a suitably atmospheric postcard home instead.

From Britain, the most convenient airport for Heidelberg is Frankfurt, an hour's train journey away.

Channel ferry gets that sinking feeling

The Newhaven-Dieppe service is a link with history as well as France. By Gerard Gilbert

THE INDEPENDENT



Lively and cosmopolitan, Lisbon possesses a very special character and charm. Set on the banks of the Tagus River, the city presents an intriguing combination of the old and the new – its long and varied history can be seen everywhere, and yet it offers all the attractions of a modern metropolis. Once one of the most important ports in the world and capital of the Portuguese Empire, Lisbon's maritime heritage has always been a source of great pride to the city as the Monument to the Discoverers and the Impressive Vasco de Gama Bridge illustrate. There are many other attractions to be admired too, including the Belem Tower, St George's Castle and the Hieronymite Monastery. As well as a city of beautiful buildings, you will also find in Lisbon excellent restaurants, fashionable shops and sophisticated nightlife in its colourful streets. So come with us and discover for yourself the unique quality that makes Lisbon one of the most interesting and beautiful cities in the world.

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OSCAR WILDE went into exile on it. Lord Lucan is reputed to have jumped off the back of it. Georges Simenon named a book after it, and the future Vietnamese liberation leader Ho Chi Minh worked as a pastry cook on it. But it now looks increasingly likely that the Newhaven-Dieppe ferry will be consigned to its colourful past as P&O Stena prepares to pull the plug on the much-loved 173-year-old cross-channel service between East Sussex and Normandy.

With passenger numbers down from 1 million to fewer than 700,000 a year, P&O Stena is claiming losses of £8m on the Newhaven-Dieppe link – a victim, it is claimed, of increased competition from the Channel Tunnel. The company has already pulled its troubled fast ferry service, *The Elite*, from the crossing, and now only one ancient ferry, *The Cambria*, chugs across from the Sussex coast. The future of even that will depend on the results of P&O's "consultation period" with UK and French unions. Most people expect a withdrawal from Newhaven, once the lucrative Christmas period is over.

It looks as if the post-Tunnel rationalisation of the Channel crossings is now in full swing. Competition with Le Shuttle has already forced Selly Line off its Ramsgate-Ostend crossing. Luckily for Ramsgate, Thanet District Council has now set up a consortium to run freight services to Ostend, with, they hope, passenger services resuming in the New Year. Lewes Council in East Sussex has no such easy solution. Newhaven's port is in private hands, owned by Sea Containers. "Sea Containers is interested only in Sea Containers", claims Norman Baker, Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes, which includes Newhaven. "Its strategy over the past 10 years has been minimum expenditure – just enough to deal with maintenance of statutory obligations – while bleeding as much money as it can out of the port."

"We would not be in this situation if the port and the ferry were in public hands. That may sound old Labour or old Liberal, but it is difficult not to draw that conclusion."

Steve Lawrence at Sea Containers thinks that's just an old argument. The company

has invested £2m in port infrastructure this decade, he says, but was unwilling to go ahead with the far more expensive deepening of the port without the long-term commitment to Newhaven from P&O Stena.

"As port owners, we were unable to agree commercial terms with P&O Stena," says Mr Lawrence. "They were unable to commit to long-term agreement. But that is an old problem. At the moment, we have submitted plans for the development of Newhaven's West Quay. As regards the ferry link, we have given commitment in principle to operate a fast ferry link from next Easter should P&O pull out. If that's not doing something for Newhaven, then what is?"

So it seems that a potentially lucrative and popular ferry crossing is going begging – or will be when and if P&O Stena, as expected, pulls out of the route. If the EU suspends July's abolition of duty free, there will be added incentive for an independent operator to enter the fray. Newhaven is the closest passenger port to France from London, and likewise Dieppe is the closest port to Paris. Sitting in his stylish

post-modernist office in Dieppe, the town's Communist mayor, Christian Cuvillier, is adamant about the French commitment to the crossing.

"We will not let the line die," he says firmly. The port is already preparing a stop-gap freight-only service should P&O Stena pull out. He is sceptical about the ferry company's losses, claiming that about £3m of the £8m deficit is due to P&O Stena diverting freight traffic to its Dover-Calais crossing.

The investment that has been pumped into the French side of the crossing dwarves anything in East Sussex. Dieppe has borrowed heavily to dredge an outer port (to berth the new generation of super-ferries) and to build a state-of-the-art ferry terminal. The regional council for Upper Normandy has also upgraded the main road between Dieppe

and Rouen so that it is virtually now a motorway. A severing of the cross-Channel link with England would put in jeopardy the last plank in this alternative London-Paris route – an upgrading of the Dieppe-Rouen railway that could link the port with France's TGV network.

Monsieur Cuvillier and a 70-strong delegation from Dieppe were in Westminster recently, lobbying Glenda Jackson, the Transport Minister. Their ferry from Dieppe left at 3.45am and was an hour late docking – symptoms of a run-down service that is putting more and more people off the route.

"But despite problems with the boats, despite poor time-keeping," says Norman Baker, MP for Lewes, "700,000 passengers were carried last year. They used the line in spite of P&O Stena, rather than because of it."

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150 من الاموال



Little appears to have changed in the Black Mountains - although the cows are now bar-coded and free-range chickens have disappeared under a pile of regulations

Britain on View

The secret home of the hermit

The Black Mountains, between Wales and England, are home to wild legends and spectacular scenery. By Natasha Edwards

It is a strange experience returning as a visitor to the place where you grew up. Suddenly you get a new perspective on it what it has to offer, and on its secrets. Home is border country: a tiny section of the Black Mountains, the border between Gwent and Powys (our river) and, further east, between Wales and England (Offa's Dyke), but rather than resembling one or other, this is an area that is just as distinctively itself.

Our river, the Grwyne Fawr (big), to distinguish it from the Grwyne Fechan (little) - woe betide anyone who dares call it a stream - provides the constant sound of rushing water. When we were children we would spend hours playing Pool Sticks on the bridge, constructing stone dams and building twig rafts, all combined with an enormous amount of falling in, but it's not just nostalgia that still makes me want to stay. When I'm here my periphery is willingly limited to a tiny sphere where I know every tree, every rickety gate and every boulder.

There are two conventional tourist sights that merit inclusion in any guidebook: in the next valley, the ruins of Llanthony Abbey, complete

with convenient pub in the old cellars (Kilvert complained when he walked here one day and ran into two tourists; now you may well find a coachload), and, closer to home and more private, Patricio church. We're proud to have our own private saint, too: one of your famous biblical numbers, but the obscure local martyr Merthyr Issul, by whose name the church has come out as Patrishow, or Patricio. Issul was a hermit who was murdered by an un-

are an ancient font, two stone altars and a finely carved rood screen, complete with oak leaves and dragons at each end, all of which should have disappeared with the Reformation, only this church was too remote for anyone to bother. There are memorial tablets with jolly, trumpet-playing angels and frescoes on the wall. As well as the royal coat of arms (compulsory after the Restoration) and the 10 Commandments, my favourite is

ing with a picnic and with perilous stepping-stones across the stream to the sheep dip, the final challenge; now it is a short evening stroll.

It is a landscape that has been worn with time, but this is not so much an area steeped in history, as one where history, legend and the imagination are totally muddled up. The Archbishop of Canterbury crossed our bridge preaching the First Crusade, while the romantically named Coed Dias (field of

coded, free-range chickens have disappeared under a pile of regulations, and the farmers are getting older. Tourism seems to have become more organised, too, although whether it's protection of the environment or mollycoddling of the visitor is hard to tell. The last few metres of the Sugar Loaf, once a rocky scramble, are now crowned by steps. The walk through the marshy alder wood in the cwm - a mysterious valley full of rare, dank plants which was previously so wet and boggy that only my brother and I would go there - is now neatly duck-boarded and waymarked; the species are indicated, and you could walk there in sandals.

Happily one has yet found the hermit's shack half-way up the hill. A mysterious ramshackle ruin with bits of pointed arch, the remnants of a spiral staircase in odd bits of wood and concrete and a wobbling plank bridge across the stream designed to keep all but the determined out, it was the home, so we were told, of a tailor from Gloucester who went there to escape the nuclear bomb. The threat may be gone, but I can understand why this was the one place in the world where he chose to seek refuge.



The ruins of Llanthony Abbey

David Hunter

This is not so much an area steeped in history, as one where history, legend and the imagination are totally muddled up

grateful traveller to whom he had given shelter. A subsequent pilgrim was healed by the waters in the little stream and left a crock of gold to build the church.

The story surely changes each time in the telling, but the church, perched on a mountainside, is a gem. It's sometimes lost in the clouds, although a stone bench along one outside wall and an outdoor pulpit testify to optimistic days when the service was occasionally held outside. Inside

the doom figure - a far from frightening, barrel-ribbed skeleton representing Time, holding an hourglass and a spade in one hand, a dagger in the other.

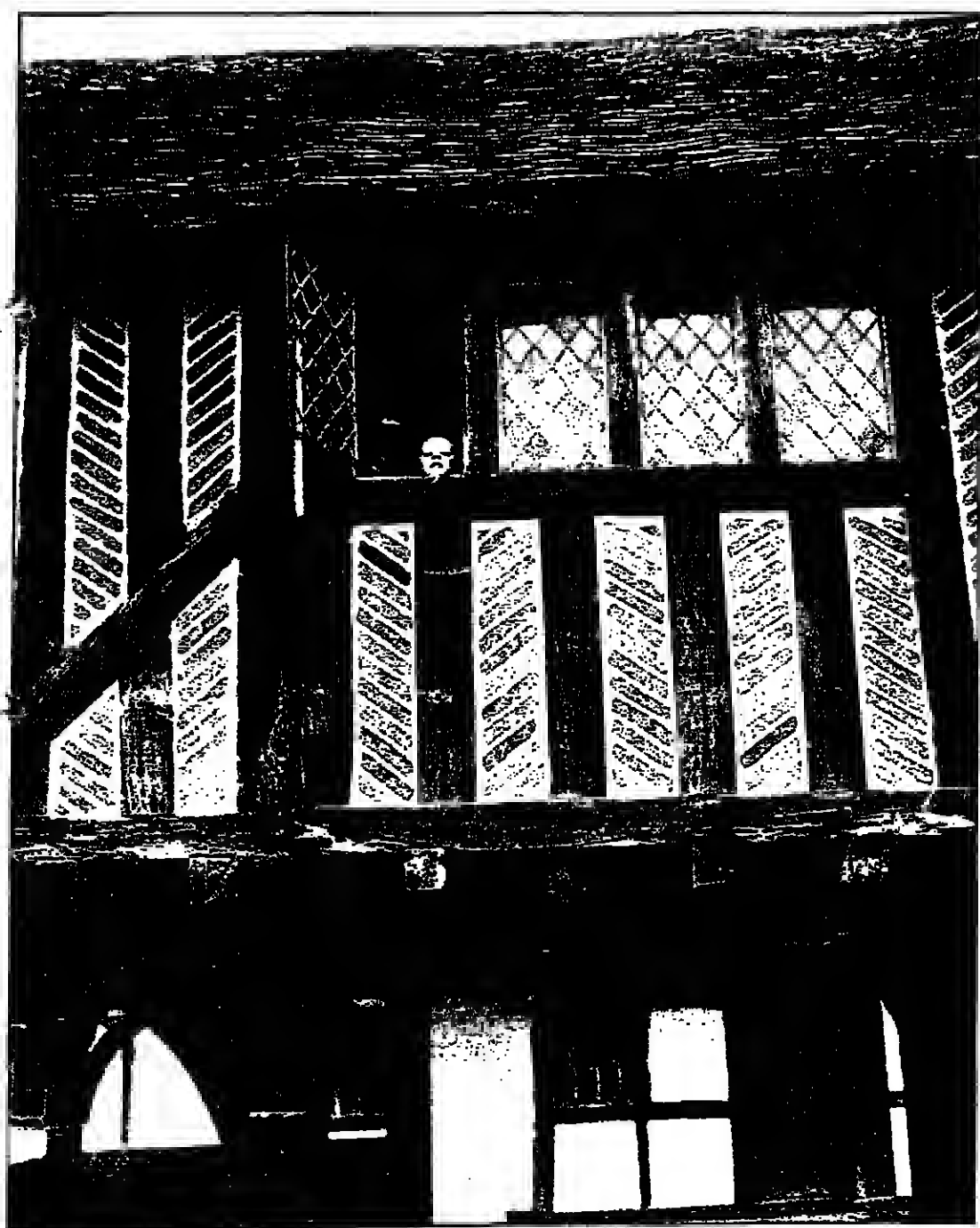
Above the church, the lane goes through a funnel of dry-stone wall to become open mountain and a favourite walk. Bracken, heather, gorse, mountain ash and wily mountain sheep - only the scale has changed. When I was a child, this would seem like a marathon, start-

blood) and the Stone of Vengeance (another favourite picnic spot) testify to the site where rival tribes wrought terrible vengeance after a dinner party turned into a massacre. Who can remember whether that battle really took place, whether the Cwmvay landslide happened at the moment of the crucifixion, or where the Devil put his footstep? All are equally believable.

Not that the area has remained unchanged. The cows are now bar-

Where you absorb the essence of time and place

From watermill to Victorian cottage, at the Weald and Downland open-air museum in Sussex you mooch your way through four centuries of rural life. By Donald Hiscock



The Weald and Downland Museum - history re-sited

Donald Hiscock

SOMETIMES YOU get faintly photocopied pieces of paper passed round an office that list spoof courses. I thought I had found the rural equivalent when I picked up a leaflet at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum in West Sussex. I read about "Heavy Horses: Shaft and Pole Work", "Continuous Hurdle Fencing" and then my eyes strayed to an "Introduction to Charcoal Burning" that included the "Webster Retort".

Far from being a joke, they are some of the courses this innovative museum runs throughout the year. If you're really serious, you can enrol for an MSc in Timber Building Conservation, in partnership with Bournemouth University. But we had come for a leisurely mooch through the preserved buildings re-sited here at Singleton, to the north of Chichester. The only course we took on a chilly winter day was the circuit around the museum site, to clamber in and out of its 40 or so historic buildings preserved on a 50-acre downland setting.

I didn't realise that lath and plaster, tiles, bricks and different types of thatch were so interesting, but starting the visit in an 18th-century barn you are given an easy-to-digest survey of the type of building materials to come. If the children start tugging at your coat to move on, you can have a wry laugh at a few buildings further on where they get to play with bricks. Trying to form a Flem-

ish Bond kept them absorbed for long enough for the parents to sneak a chocolate bar and a cup of coffee from the Thermos flask.

Then it's off to the Watermill, transported here from Lurgershall, to watch grain being ground into flour. For lovers of obscure milling phraseology, you can learn about wallowers, stone nuts and shoes vibrated by a damsel. I was reminded of Chaucer, but my wife in turn reminded me that we had promised the children they could buy a bag of grain each to throw at the ducks on

On the edge of a cluster of buildings, that form a sort of village square, there is a pair of adjoining Victorian cottages. You enter one of them, and the entire place is left bare to show you the stages of its construction. When you walk through into next door, you are in touch with simple life. Four furnished rooms show you what it must have been like to bring up five children in cramped conditions. Today, ironically, these cottages would be prized and modernised as second homes, by those escaping the cramped conditions of

Thomas Crapper flushing toilet. Not for him the fascination of a charcoal burner's kiln, or the memory of seeing a treadwheel for raising water. What got him giggling, and still does, is the mention of that famous Victorian plumber.

The museum is still growing. The latest addition is the late 16th-century Poplar Cottage, which you can see being restored in a workshop on the site. A recent £1m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund has taken the museum a stage closer to the realisation of its ambitious project to build a conservation centre and shop. The wooden structure will be the largest of its kind in Britain.

It was dusk when we left the museum. We had spent almost four hours treasuring merrily through four centuries of social and architectural history. And, by the way, did you realise that the gearing ratio between the watershaft and the mainshaft in the Mill is roughly 1:3? Not many people know that.

The Weald and Downland Museum (01243 811349) is situated just off the A286 Chichester to Midhurst road at Singleton, West Sussex. Buses to Chichester, Bognor Regis and other towns stop at the entrance. Winter opening: to 28 February, Weds, Sat and Sun only, 10.30am-4pm. Rest of the year: 10.30am-6pm daily. Adults £5.20, children £2.50 (under-fives free). Family ticket (2+2) £14

Here you can learn about wallowers, stone nuts and shoes vibrated by a damsel

the millpond. I could have lingered longer over this ancient technology.

You're never quite sure what you are going to get when you enter a house, cottage or Victorian school room. What you do not get is a heavy dose of history set out on display boards - rather, you absorb the essence of place and time. Some buildings have log fires going, and unobtrusive volunteers who will answer questions. Others have recordings of what it was like to be a skilled practitioner of some once-important craft, and an explanation of the tools such tradesmen used.

late 20th century city dwelling.

When you think you are tired of the minutiae of domestic architecture, Bayleaf Farmstead with its 15th-century Wealden house and adjoining barn and gardens, is the place to visit. Here wallow large, gold-coloured pigs, friendly chickens and passing shire horses pulling hay carts. Inside the house, in the family bedroom, the children discovered the en suite garderobe.

In one of the barns was probably the highlight of the visit for my younger son. An exhibition on lead work and plumbing featured a

NEW FILMS

THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (U)
Director: Brenda Chapman, Simon Wells,
Steve Hickner
Voiced by: Val Kilmer, Ralph Fiennes and
Michelle Pfeiffer
DreamWorks booccho Jeffrey Katzenberg envisaged

his cartoon Life of Moses "painted by Claude Monet and photographed by David Lean". The end result merely winds up as *The Ten Commandments* by way of *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.
Countrywide

GENERAL RELEASE

ANTZ (PG)
See *The Independent Recommends*, right.

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)
The follow-up to *Babe* tosses the hapless "sheep-pig" into the midst of the city where he becomes the unlikely saviour of a bunch of assorted waifs. Knockabout comedy is kept to a minimum in favour of a bleak animatronic fairytale.

THE BOYS (18)
Out of jail after serving a sentence for GBH, oldest "boy" Brett Sprague (David Wenham) moves back into his mum's drab suburban home, terrorises his girlfriend and turns his younger brothers into petty henchmen. *The Boys* spotlights the down-side of life Down Under - it's potent, predatory stuff.

DANCING AT LUGHNASSA (PG)
Less a dance, more of a trudge, Pat O'Connor's Ireland-set saga pinpoints the ebb and flow of an eccentric Catholic family in deepest Donegal. What gives it backbone is Meryl Streep's regal performance as the brood's eldest sister, plus the ever-watchable Michael Gambon as the homecoming brother. Kathy Burke, Catherine McCormack and Brid Brennan also feature.

DEAD MAN'S CURVE (15)
All the students at writer-director Dan Rosen's nameless American college are trying to hutch each other, led into temptation by an obscure regulation which awards straight-A grades to room mates of suicides. Though not as deliciously nasty as the *Scream* films, *Dead Man's Curve* delivers a respectable quota of shocks.

ELIZABETH (15)
Shekhar Kapur's follow-up to *Bandit Queen* is the story of another female figurehead - this time, it's Queen Elizabeth I - struggling to succeed in a male world. But Kapur largely neglects the opportunities for fun in a story of independence triumphing over cruelty.

THE EXORCIST (25TH ANNIVERSARY RE-RELEASE) (18)
The Exorcist is a creature conditioned by rumour and hearsay. Pull it into the light, though, and Friedkin's seminal horror is still efficiently terrifying.

FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (18)
Terry Gilliam's adaptation tilts at Ralph Steadman cartoonery for its tale of a drug-fuelled journalistic assignment. The film soon descends into a carnival of narcotic lunacy and the one stand-out is Johnny Depp - who brings Hunter S Thompson into bald-headed, pigeon-toed life.

IF ONLY (15)
Mix *Thelma & Louise* with *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and you'd get Maria Ripoll's dreadful Anglo-Spanish comedy about a dumped boyfriend who is transported back in time.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (U)
A freshly restored print of Frank Capra's classic means audiences have a rare chance to appreciate the film's fine black-and-white photography on the big screen.

THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO (15)
In the fictional club at the centre of Whit Stillman's slightly sad comedy, everything sparkles - under the light from the glitterball, the dancers are united in their absent-minded beauty. Stillman does a fine job of capturing the mixture of flair, invigoration and uncertainty by which any burgeoning trend is characterised and it's refreshing to find a work that is this enchanting and intelligent.

LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS (18)
Lock, Stock and *Two Smoking Barrels* defining characteristic is its resilient morality. The picture is peopled by thugs, both amateur and professional. Young Eddy falls into the former category, but Hatchet Harry, to whom he owes £500,000, is a dangerous old-school pro.

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

THE THREE BEST FILMS



is buttressed by a fine international cast (including Robert De Niro, Jean Reno, Stellan Skarsgård), moody French locations and a clutch of supercharged car chases.

Antz (PG)
Computer-animated comedy (left) voiced by a stellar cast stars Woody Allen as a worker ant who becomes an unlikely opponent of the colony's totalitarian regime. Good fun, and Allen's best work in a while.

Slums of Beverly Hills (15)
Tamara Jenkins' feature debut is a modest but winning rite-of-passage movie about a family coping with poverty in Los Angeles' richest suburb. Alan Arkin gives an acting masterclass as the dad.

Ronin (15)
John Frankenheimer's action thriller is buttressed by a fine international cast (including Robert De Niro, Jean Reno, Stellan Skarsgård), moody French locations and a clutch of supercharged car chases.

ANTHONY QUINN

THE THREE BEST PLAYS

Hindle Wakes
Royal Exchange, Manchester
Spectacularly refurbished after the 1996 bombing, this theatre bounces back in fine resilient form with the excellent production which had to be aborted then. To 9 Jan

Martin Guerre
West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds
It's third time lucky for this much rewritten Bonhill/Schönberg musical. In Conall Morrison's starkly involving production (right), it finally emerges as a tighter, magnificent show. To 13 Feb



The Boy Who Fell Into a Book
Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough
Typically witty and ingenious concept from Alan Ayckbourn - here wearing his children's dramatist hat. To 9 Jan

PAUL TAYLOR

THE MASK OF ZORRO (PG)
This gaudy swashbuckler gallops full-speed through 19th-century California in the company of Antonio Banderas' authentically Hispanic do-gooder. A bite-sized history lesson on West Coast politics struggles amid a lot of colourful duels and clattering set-pieces.

LES MISÉRABLES (12)
Bille August turns Victor Hugo's enormous novel into an enormous film and it's as traditional as literary adaptations come these days. It's earnest, deferential and almost humourless.

MULAN (U)
Disney's animated feature has a pro-actress heroine; a strong father/daughter relationship; honour and nobility; and, of course, cross-dressing. It's also one of the most visually innovative movies that Disney has ever made.

MY NAME IS JOE (18)
Ken Loach's solid social-realist drama tells the tale of Joe (Peter Mullan), a recovering alcoholic. *My Name is Joe* brilliantly spotlights the groping hopes and thwarted ambitions of Britain caught below the poverty line.

THE NEGOTIATOR (15)
Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey go head to head in Gray's thrilling drama. The script has a predilection for lunk-headed swearing that sounds uneasy in the mouths of such articulate, rhetorical performers.

OUT OF SIGHT (15)
George Clooney plays the law-breaking hero as a down-and-dirty version of Cary Grant, and turns in the best performance of his career so far. He is a grown-up film star when most of Hollywood's male leads don't look old enough to get served in a pub.

THE PARENT TRAP (PG)
The Parent Trap catches Disney cannibalising its own back catalogue: re-heating its 1961 Hayley Mills heart-warmer into a spry, cross-cultural caper starring Lindsay Lohan as the separated-at-birth twin sisters who are determined to get their parents back together.

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (U)
Sublime cinema. It's a romantic comedy but there's nothing trivial about it. George Cukor's movie has a strange and melancholy heart and Katharine Hepburn's unsatisfied headdress sheds real tears.

PLAYING GOD (18)
Cracker director Andy Wilson suffers a lesson in Hollywood politics with this glossy but garbled thriller about a junkie doctor (David Duchovny) embroiled with a gang of counterfeiters headed by Tim Hutton.

RONIN (15)
See *The Independent Recommends*, above.

ROUNDERS (15)
John Dahl's poker-club thriller is not a great comeback for the director of *The Last Seduction*, but it is certainly an improvement on his last film, the eminently forgettable *Unforgettable*. But its main problem is the weak hand dealt by Dahl's golden boy star, Matt Damon, who is out acted by almost everyone else in the movie.

RUSH HOUR (15)
Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker star in this hit-and-miss affair, which continues the Americanisation of the Hong Kong action icon, marrying him with an LA backdrop and a wisecracking black comic.

SLUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS (15)
See *The Independent Recommends*, above.

CINEMA COUNTRYWIDE

ABERDEEN (03705-050007): The Parent Trap (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Rush Hour (15); Enemy of the State (15); Antz (PG); Out of Sight (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG)

VIRGIN (0541-202050): Out of Sight (15); There's Something About Mary (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Rush Hour (15); Mulan (U); Enemy of the State (15); Blade (18); The Negotiator (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Air Bud (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas (PG); Small Soldiers (PG)

BIRMINGHAM (0121-440 3838): Mulan (U); The Last Days of Disco (15); Ever After (PG); There's Something About Mary (15)

ODEON (08705-050007): Dr. Dolittle (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Ronin (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Negotiator (15); The Exorcist (25th Anniversary Release) (18); Mulan (U); Out of Sight (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Godzilla (PG); Small Soldiers (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Antz (PG); Rush Hour (15); Blade (18); The Negotiator (15)

ARCADIAN CENTRE VIRGIN (0541-555177): Enemy of the State (15); Rush Hour (15); Mulan (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Small Soldiers (PG); Ronin (15); Fairytale: A True Story (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas (PG); Anastasia (U); Out of Sight (15); Saving Private Ryan (15); Rush Hour (15); Blade (18); Enemy of the State (15); Mulan (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Home Alone 3 (PG); Mulan (U); The Parent Trap (PG)

GREAT PARK VIRGIN (0121-4530465): The Truman Show (PG); Godzilla (PG); Antz (PG); The Negotiator (15); Small Soldiers (PG); Good Burger (PG); Ronin (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Fairytale: A True Story (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas (PG); Anastasia (U); Out of Sight (15); Saving Private Ryan (15); Rush Hour (15); Blade (18); Enemy of the State (15); Mulan (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Home Alone 3 (PG); Mulan (U); The Parent Trap (PG)

BOLTON (0121-4530465): The Truman Show (PG); Godzilla (PG); Antz (PG); The Negotiator (15); Small Soldiers (PG); Good Burger (PG); Ronin (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Fairytale: A True Story (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas (PG); Anastasia (U); Out of Sight (15); Saving Private Ryan (15); Rush Hour (15); Blade (18); Enemy of the State (15); Mulan (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Home Alone 3 (PG); Mulan (U); The Parent Trap (PG)

WARRNER VILLAGE (01204-669988): The Mask of Zorro (PG); Mulan (U); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); The Prince of Egypt (U); Blade (18); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Small Soldiers (PG); Mulan (U); Rush Hour (15); The Negotiator (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Santa Clause (U); Out of Sight (15); Antz (PG)

CARLISLE (01228-514654): Enemy of the State (15); The Santa Clause (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Antz (PG); The Negotiator (15); The Parent Trap (PG); The Preacher's Wife (U); Mulan (U); Rush Hour (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Psycho (15)

LONSDALE CINEMAS (01228-514654): Enemy of the State (15); The Santa Clause (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Antz (PG); The Negotiator (15); The Parent Trap (PG); The Preacher's Wife (U); Mulan (U); Rush Hour (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Psycho (15)

CHESTER (01244-343216): Out of Sight (15); Small Soldiers (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); Antz (PG); Ever After (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Rush Hour (15); Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (18); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Prince of Egypt (U)

VIRGIN (0541-555158): Rush Hour (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Miracle on 34th Street (1994 Version) (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Out of Sight (15); Enemy of the State (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Antz (PG)

DUNDEE (01382-226865): Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (18); The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Antz (PG)

ODEON (08705-050007): The Mask of Zorro (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Small Soldiers (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); The Negotiator (15); Rush Hour (15); Out of Sight (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Blade (18); Mulan (U); Antz (PG)

STEPS THEATRE (01382-434037): Apocalypse Now (18); Dr. Dolittle (PG)

EOINBURGH (0131-228 1638): ABC FILM CENTRE (0131-228 1638): Enemy of the State (15); Out of Sight (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Antz (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U)

ABC WESTER HAIRES (0131-442 2200): Rush Hour (15); Ronin (15); The Muppet Christmas Carol (U); The Negotiator (15); Small Soldiers (PG); Blade (18); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Antz (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); Mulan (U); Enemy of the State (15); Out of Sight (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Prince of Egypt (U)

CAMEO (0131-228 4141): The Big Lebowski (18); The Truman Show (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Philadelphia Story (U); La Vie en Rose (18); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); The Soldier (Asian Film) (NC); My Name is Joe (15); The Boys (18); It's a Wonderful Life (U); Il Postino (15); Elizabeth (15)

DOMINION (0131-447 4771): The Parent Trap (PG); Elizabeth (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Antz (PG)

ODEON (08705-050007): The Parent Trap (PG); The Magic Show: Quest for Camelot (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Antz (PG); Grease (20th Anniversary Edition) (PG); The Negotiator (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Rush Hour (15); Mulan (U); Out of Sight (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Enemy of the State (15)

UCI (0990-889990): The Exorcist (25th Anniversary Release) (18); Air Bud (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Rush Hour (15); Saving Private Ryan (15); Blade (18); Ronin (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Small Soldiers (PG); Antz (PG); The Negotiator (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); There's Something About Mary (15); Out of Sight (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Mulan (U); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Enemy of the State (15)

GLASGOW (0141-637 2641): Enemy of the State (15); Antz (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Rush Hour (15); The Prince of Egypt (U)

ABC SAUCHIEHALL ST (0141-332 1592): Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (18); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Small Soldiers (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Antz (PG); Ronin (15); Out of Sight (15)

THE BOMBAY CINEMA (0141-419 0722): Majestic (PG)

CALEDONIAN GROSVENOR (0141-339 4298): The Prince of Egypt (U); My Name is Joe (15); Shallow Grave (18); Enemy of the State (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Prince of Egypt (U)

ODEON (08705-050007): Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Blade (18); Mulan (U); The Negotiator (15); Rush Hour (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Out of Sight (15); My Name is Joe (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Antz (PG)

SPRINGFIELD QUAY (08705-050007): Babe: Pig in the City (U); Elizabeth (15); Blade (18); Mulan (U); Enemy of the State (15); Rush Hour (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); There's Something About Mary (15); Out of Sight (15); The Parent Trap (PG); It's a Wonderful Life (U); Antz (PG); My Name is Joe (15); Small Soldiers (PG); The Negotiator (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Ronin (15)

VIRGIN FORGE PARKHEAD (0541-555158): The Parent Trap (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Small Soldiers (PG); My Name is Joe (15); Rush Hour (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Mulan (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Enemy of the State (15); Antz (PG)

HULL (08705-050007): Ronin (15); Saving Private Ryan (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Blade (18); Ever After (PG); Mulan (U); Small Soldiers (PG); Barney's Great Adventure (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Les Misérables (12); The Parent Trap (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Out of Sight (15); Enemy of the State (15); The Borrowers (U); Antz (PG); Dr. Dolittle (PG); Rush Hour (15)

UCI 8 ST ANDREWS QUAY (0990-889990): Mulan (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Blade (18); Out of Sight (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Antz (PG); Dr. Dolittle (PG); The Adventures of Robin Hood (U); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Enemy of the State (15); Rush Hour (15); The Negotiator (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Small Soldiers (PG); Miracle on 34th Street (1994 Version) (U)

INVERNESS (01463-234274): Cube (15); Mulan (U); Elizabeth (15); Cube (15)

CALEDONIAN CINEMAS (01463-233302): Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Dr. Dolittle (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Elizabeth (15); The Santa Clause (U); Antz (PG)

WARRNER VILLAGE (01463-711147): Mulan (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Rush Hour (15); Antz (PG); The Santa Clause (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Small Soldiers (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Blade (18); The Horse Whisperer (PG)

LEEDS (0113-245 2665): The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Small Soldiers (PG); Rush Hour (15); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Out of Sight (15); Antz (PG)

HYDE PARK (0113-275 2045): My Name is Joe (15); It's a Wonderful Life (U)

ODEON (08705-050007): Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); Rush Hour (15); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U)

WARRNER VILLAGE (0113-275 9855): Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); The Prince of Egypt (U); Antz (PG); Mulan (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Out of Sight (15); Small Soldiers (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Negotiator (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Santa Clause (U); Blade (18); Velvet Goldmine (18); Ronin (15)

LEICESTER (01533-275 2045): My Name is Joe (15); It's a Wonderful Life (U)

ODEON FREEMANS PARK (08705-050007): Out of Sight (15); Saving Private Ryan (15); Antz (PG); Small Soldiers (PG); The Truman Show (PG); Blade (18); Rush Hour (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Mulan (U); Lost in Space (PG); The Negotiator (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Enemy of the State (15); Barney's Great Adventure (U); Dr. Dolittle (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); There's Something About Mary (15); Ronin (15); Godzilla (PG)

WARRNER VILLAGE (0116-282 7733): Mulan (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Small Soldiers (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Out of Sight (15); Rush Hour (15); Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (18); The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Santa Clause (U); Enemy of the State (15); Blade (18); Ronin (15); Antz (PG)

LIVERPOOL (0151-724 3550): Babe: Pig in the City (U); Rush Hour (15)

ODEON (08705-050007): Enemy of the State (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Antz (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Ronin (15); Rush Hour (15)

PLAZA (0151-474 4076): Les Misérables (12); Freight (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Parent Trap (PG)

VIRGIN (0541-555146): The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Mulan (U); Enemy of the State (15); Antz (PG); The Parent Trap (PG); Small Soldiers (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Negotiator (15)

WOOLTON PICTURE HOUSE (0151-428 1919): The Prince of Egypt (U)

MANCHESTER (0161-839 0700): Antz (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Blade (18); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Small Soldiers (PG); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (18); Mulan (U)

CINECITY (0161-445 8181): Enemy of the State (15); Out of Sight (15); The Parent Trap (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); The Negotiator (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Exorcist (25th Anniversary Release) (18); Jingle All the Way (PG); Dr. Dolittle (PG); Saving Private Ryan (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Negotiator (15); Small Soldiers (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Out of Sight (15)

WARRNER VILLAGE (0114-242 1237): The Truman Show (PG); Saving Private Ryan (15); Mulan (U); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Blade (18); Ronin (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); There's Something About Mary (15); Out of Sight (15); Small Soldiers (PG); The Negotiator (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Negotiator (15); Small Soldiers (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Out of Sight (15)

WARRNER VILLAGE (0114-256 9222): Small Soldiers (PG); Blade (18); Antz (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15); The Negotiator (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Rush Hour (15); Out of Sight (15); The Santa Clause (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Mulan (U)

STONE-ON-TRENT (01782-212320): The Prince of Egypt (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Antz (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Enemy of the State (15); Rush Hour (15)

FILM THEATRE (01782-411188): The Governess (15)

ODEON (08705-050007): Antz (PG); Small Soldiers (PG); There's Something About Mary (15); Rush Hour (15); Ronin (15); Enemy of the State (15); Mulan (U); Blade (18); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Out of Sight (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Mask of Zorro (PG)

TELFORD (01890-889990): Babe: Pig in the City (U); Elizabeth (15); Mulan (U); Antz (PG); There's Something About Mary (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Jingle All the Way (PG); Dr. Dolittle (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Exorcist (25th Anniversary Release) (18); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Blade (18); Out of Sight (15)

WAKEFIELD (01924-332230): The Mask of Zorro (PG); Out of Sight (15); Antz (PG); Ronin (15); North by Northwest (PG); Rush Hour (15); Bad Boy Bobby (18); Small Soldiers (PG); The Santa Clause (U); Kidnapped (PG); The Negotiator (15); Dr. Dolittle (PG); Babe: Pig in the City (U); There's Something About Mary (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Mulan (U); Enemy of the State (15); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Blade (18); Lost in Space (PG)

WIGAN (0541-555150): The Parent Trap (PG); The Negotiator (15); Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas (PG); Enemy of the State (15); Blade (18); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Antz (PG); Small Soldiers (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Out of Sight (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Rush Hour (15)

WOODHALL SPA (01526-352166): Out of Sight (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U)

SALFORD QUAYS (0541-555157): The Mask of Zorro (PG); Antz (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Muppet Christmas Carol (U); Out of Sight (15); Blade (18); Babe: Pig in the City (U); Mulan (U); Enemy of the State (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Parent Trap (PG)

SHEFFIELD (08705-050007): Babe: Pig in the City (U); Rush Hour (15); The Parent Trap (PG); Enemy of the State (15); 101 Dalmatians (U); Antz (PG); Ronin (15); Mulan (U); Blade (18); Elizabeth (15); Small Soldiers (PG); Out of Sight (15); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); The Prince of Egypt (U); The Truman Show (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG)

UCI CRYSTAL PEAKS 10 (0990-688990): There's Something About Mary (15); Antz (PG); Blade (18); Mulan (U); Enemy of the State (15); The Exorcist (25th Anniversary Release) (18); Jingle All the Way (PG); Dr. Dolittle (PG); Saving Private Ryan (15); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); The Mask of Zorro (PG); Rush Hour (15); The Negotiator (15); Small Soldiers (PG); The Prince of Egypt (U); Out of Sight (15)

WARRNER VILLAGE (01504-691094): The Mask of Zorro (PG); It's a Wonderful Life (U); Rush Hour (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Ronin (15); Mulan (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Antz (PG); Out of Sight (15); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Elizabeth (15); The Santa Clause (U); Small Soldiers (PG)

WARRNER VILLAGE (01504-691094): The Mask of Zorro (PG); It's a Wonderful Life (U); Rush Hour (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Ronin (15); Mulan (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Antz (PG); Out of Sight (15); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Elizabeth (15); The Santa Clause (U); Small Soldiers (PG)

WARRNER VILLAGE (01504-691094): The Mask of Zorro (PG); It's a Wonderful Life (U); Rush Hour (15); The Prince of Egypt (U); Babe: Pig in the City (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Ronin (15); Mulan (U); The Parent Trap (PG); Antz (PG); Out of Sight (15); Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels (18); Elizabeth (15

THEATRE

COUNTRYWIDE

ABERDEEN
HIS MAJESTY'S Peter Pan Sonia stars in J.M. Barrie's delightful tale. Tue-Thur 7pm, mts Tue-Thur 1.45pm, ends 3 Jan. £10-£14, concs available. Rosemount Studios (01224-641122)

BIRMINGHAM
ALEXANDER THEATRE A Tale Of Two Cities Paul Nicholas stars in this new musical adaptation. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, mts Wed, Thur & Sat 3.30pm, no p.m. 2.30pm, ends 16 Jan. £7-£24.50. Suffolk Street (0121-643 1231)

BIRMINGHAM REP A Christmas Carol Michael Bogdanov directs a new adaptation of Charles Dickens's novel. 22-23 Dec. 7.15pm, mts 21 & 22 Dec. 10.30am, 21, 23-24 Dec. 3.30pm. £7-£19, concs available. Broad Street (0121-236 4455)

HIPPODROME Cinderella Danny La Rue and Brian Cullery star in this popular family favourite. 23 Dec. 2.30pm & 7.15pm, 24 Dec. 2pm & 6.30pm, 27 Dec. 5.15pm, ends 20 Feb. £9-£21.75, concs available. Hurst Street (0121-622 7466)

BLACKPOOL
GRAND THEATRE Aladdin Magical grand pantomime starring Sleepy. Mon-Wed 7pm, mts Tue-Thur 2pm, ends 10 Jan. £6-£13.50, concs available. Church Street (01253-290190)

CVENTRY
BELGRADE Theatre Sleeping Beauty Huge family pantomime with a magical time machine. Mon-Wed 7pm, mts Mon-Thur 2.30pm, ends 23 Jan. £5-£14.50, concs available. Corporation Street (01203-553055)

WARWICK ARTS CENTRE Shindad Join Shindad and Princess Panto in an exciting and romantic voyage. 21-22 Dec. 5.30pm, 23 Dec. 7.30pm, mts 23 Dec. 2.30pm, 21-22 Dec. 1.30pm, ends 18 Jan. £8-£10, concs available. Gibbet Hill Road (01203-524524)

DUNDEE
DUNDEE REPERTORY THEATRE The Jungle Book A charming adaptation of Kipling's tale about a boy and his jungle friends. Mon-Wed 7.15pm, 24 Dec. 7pm, mts 22-24 Dec. 3.30pm, ends 9 Jan. £9-£10.25, concs available. Tay Square (01382-223530)

EDINBURGH
KING'S THEATRE The Adventures Of Aladdin The magical experience of Aladdin starring David Rintoul, Allan Stewart and Gerard Kelly. 22-23 Dec. 7pm, 24 Dec. 6.30pm, mts Tue-Thur 2pm, ends 17 Jan. £7.50-£14.50, concs available. Leven Street (0131-529 6000)

ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE The Snow Queen Stuart Paterson's charming adaptation of Andersen's fairytale. Mon-Thur 2.30pm & 7pm, ends 9 Jan. £4-£15, concs available. Grindlay Street (0131-229 9697)

THEATRE WORKSHOP II Bellissimo Silenzio A brilliant fairy tale of mystery and adventure. Mon-Wed 7.30pm, mts Mon-Thur 2.30pm, ends 24 Dec. £6.50, concs £4, family ticket £18. Hamilton Place (0131-226 5425)

GLASGOW

CITIZENS THEATRE Martin The Magnificent Classic Arthurian legend, wizardry and evil forces combine in an enchanting new Christmas show. 21 & 22 Dec. 10am & 2pm, 23 Dec. 2pm & 7pm, 24 Dec. 2pm & 5pm, ends 26 Dec. £2.50-£10, concs available. Gorbals Street (0141-429 0022)

KING'S THEATRE Sleeping Beauty Elaine C Smith stars in this magical fairytale production. 24 Dec. 2pm, Mon-Wed 1pm, ends 16 Jan. £2.50-£15, concs available. Bath Street (0141-287 5511)

PAVILION THEATRE Pinocchio The Wrinkles and Jimmy Cricket deliver a musical pantomime. Mon-Thur 7.30pm, 23 & 24 Dec. 1.30pm, ends 23 Jan. £6-£9.50, concs available. Renfield Street (0141-332 1846)

HALIFAX
VICTORIA THEATRE Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs Family pantomime with stars from TV's Gladiators. Emmerdale and Last Of The Summer Wine. Mon-Wed 7pm, 24 Dec. 5pm, mts Mon-Thur 2pm, ends 24 Dec. 1pm, ends 2 Jan. £5-£9.10, concs available. Words End (01482-351158)

HULL
NEW THEATRE Aladdin Jim Davidson directs a family pantomime for change, starring Darren Day and Ruth Madoc. Mon-Wed 2.30pm & 7.30pm, ends 24 Jan. £7.50-£15.50, concs available. Oxford Street (0161-242 2525)

ROYAL EXCHANGE THEATRE Hindle Wakes The Royal Exchange reopens with the production which was cut short by the bomb blast in 1996. Mon-Fri 7.30pm, Sat 8pm (no p.m. 2 & 2.30pm), mts 23 Dec. 2.30pm, ends 24 Jan. £7-£23, concs available. St Anne's Square (0161-833 9833)

MOLD
CLYWD THEATRE Cymru Aladdin The work 'n' roll pantomime. Mon-Thur 7.30pm, mts 22, 24 Dec, ends 30 Jan. £10-£15, concs available. Civic Centre (01352-755114)

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
THEATRE The Princess And The Goblin The goblins attempt to take over the world in this magical Christmas show. Mon-Wed 7pm, mts Mon-Thur 2pm, ends 9 Jan. £10.75-£12.75, concs available. Barras Bridge (0191-230 5151)

THEATRE ROYAL Cinderella Popular pantomime with stars from TV's Coronation Street and EastEnders. Mon-Thur 7pm, mts Mon-Thur 2pm, ends 23 Jan. £5-£15, concs available. Grey Street (0191-232 0611)

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME
NEW VICTORIA THEATRE A Christmas Carol David Bolman's adaptation of Charles Dickens' tale of greed and avarice in the dark streets of Victorian London. 21-23 Dec. 7.30pm, mts Mon-Thur 2pm, ends 9 Jan. £5.50-£12.50, concs available. Eurula Road (01782-717932)

NOTTINGHAM
NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE Jack And The Beanstalk Kenneth Williams and his Taylor writes and directs his fifteenth consecutive pantomime. Mon-Thur 2.30pm & 7.30pm, ends 10 Jan. £7-£10, concs £5-£8. Hanover Street (0115-941 9419)

LLANDUDNO

NORTH WALES THEATRE The Adventures Of Peter Pan Swash-buckling entertainment starring Glen Murphy from London's Burning as Captain Hook. Mon-Wed 7.15pm, Mon-Thur 2.15pm, ends 3 Jan. £7.50-£12.50, concs available. Promenade (01492-872000)

MANCHESTER
FORUM THEATRE WYTHENSHAW The Snow Queen Imaginative adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale. 21-23 Dec. 2.30pm & 7.30pm, ends 24 Dec. £6-£11. Civic Centre (0161-437 9663)

LIBRARY THEATRE Puss In Boots Adventure story about a young man who leaves home in search of fame and fortune accompanied by his exceptionally clever cat Puss. Mon-Wed 7pm, mts 21-23 Dec. 2.30pm, ends 16 Jan. £8-£15, concs available. Central Library, St Peter's Square (0161-236 7170)

OPERA HOUSE Oliver Twist Wilton starts in Lionel Bart's ever popular musical which follows the fortunes of an orphan in Victorian London. Mon-Sat 7.30pm, Wed & Sat 2.30pm, ends 30 Jan. £10-£29. Quay Street (0161-242 2503)

PALACE THEATRE Cinderella Jim Davidson directs a family pantomime for change, starring Darren Day and Ruth Madoc. Mon-Wed 2.30pm & 7.30pm, ends 24 Jan. £7.50-£15.50, concs available. Oxford Street (0161-242 2525)

ROYAL EXCHANGE THEATRE Hindle Wakes The Royal Exchange reopens with the production which was cut short by the bomb blast in 1996. Mon-Fri 7.30pm, Sat 8pm (no p.m. 2 & 2.30pm), mts 23 Dec. 2.30pm, ends 24 Jan. £7-£23, concs available. St Anne's Square (0161-833 9833)

MOLD
CLYWD THEATRE Cymru Aladdin The work 'n' roll pantomime. Mon-Thur 7.30pm, mts 22, 24 Dec, ends 30 Jan. £10-£15, concs available. Civic Centre (01352-755114)

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
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NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE Jack And The Beanstalk Kenneth Williams and his Taylor writes and directs his fifteenth consecutive pantomime. Mon-Thur 2.30pm & 7.30pm, ends 10 Jan. £7-£10, concs £5-£8. Hanover Street (0115-941 9419)

PERTH

PERTH THEATRE Aladdin And His Wonderful Lamp With Wishee Weehee and Widow Twankey and the other family favourites. Mon-Wed 7.30pm & 7.30pm, ends 9 Jan. £4.50-£13, concs available. High Street (01738-621031)

SHEFFIELD
CRUCIBLE THEATRE South Pacific Bombs the winter blues with a visit to the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. Mon-Wed 7.30pm, mts Tue-Thur 2.30pm, ends 23 Dec. £11-£15, concs available. Norfolk Street (0114-276 9922)

LYCEUM THEATRE Jack And The Beanstalk Gladiators stars. Mon-Wed 7pm, Mon-Thur 2pm, ends 17 Jan. £6.50-£14.50, Norfolk Street (0114-276 9922)

STOKE-ON-TRENT
THEATRE ROYAL Hanley The Adventures Of Robin Hood Spectacular production starring Little And Large. Dec 21-24 7.15pm, mts 20-24 Dec. 2pm, ends 17 Jan. £5.50-£14, concs available. Pall Mall (01782-207777)

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRE The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe Adrian Mitchell's adaptation of the CS Lewis Narnia classic. In rep. 21-23 Dec. 2.30pm, ends 27 Feb. £5-£30. The Winter's Tale Seasonal tale of love, jealousy directed by Gregory Doran. In rep. 21 & 22 Dec. 7.30pm, ends 26 Feb. £7-£30. Waterville (01789-295633)

SWAN THEATRE A Month In The Country Brian Friel's adaptation of Turgenev's portrait of an consuming sexual desire. In rep. 21-24 Dec. 7.30pm, ends 26 Feb. £7-£30. Waterville (01789-295633)

YORK
GRAND OPERA HOUSE Jack And The Beanstalk Film family pantomime with TV stars from Gladiators and Home And Away. Mon-Wed 7.30pm, mts Mon-Thur 2.30pm, ends 10 Jan. £8-£12, concs available. Lumberland Street (01904-671818)

THEATRE ROYAL Beauty And The Beast Bewick Kaler stars in York's seasonal feast of fun. 24 Dec. 2pm, Mon-Wed 2.30pm & 7.30pm, 24 Dec. 4pm, 4pm, 5.30pm, ends 30 Jan. £10-£14.75, concs available. St. Leonard's Place (01904-623568)

CINDERELLA Angela Carter's version of this fairytale is staged by the acclaimed Improbable Theatre. York Hamamshire King Street, W6 (0181-741 2311) or Hamamshire. Phone for times, ends 9 Jan. £5-£18, concs £6.50.

JESUS, MY BOY Tom Conti stars in John Davies's satirical Christmas show. York Apollo Shakespeare Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5070) or Picc Circ. Tue-Fri 8pm, Sat 8pm & 8pm, 11pm & 8pm, £5.50-£18.50.

THE SNOWMAN Award-winning production of Raymond Briggs' contemporary classic about a young boy who befriends a snowman. Sadler's Wells At The Peacock, Portlough Street, WC2 (0171-863 8222) or Temple. Phone for times, ends 30 Jan. £7.50-£32.50.

EXHIBITIONS

BIRMINGHAM
BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY Burne-Jones Important work by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. Mon-Thur, Sat 10am-5pm, Fri 10.30am-5pm, Sun 12.30pm-5pm (closes for Christmas opening). 17 Jan. £5, £3.50 concs, £14 family. Chamberlain Square (0121-303 2834)

EDINBURGH
CITY ART CENTRE Alice Maher and Tim Davies Leading artists Maher and Davies exhibit unusual new work. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 12noon-5pm (phone for Christmas opening), ends 4 Jan. free. Market Street (0131-529 3993)

GLASGOW
KELVINGROVE MUSEUM & ART GALLERY Travelling Companions: Monet and Seurat The third exhibition in the series focusses on two French painters. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 11am-5pm, ends 31 Dec. free. Kelvingrove (0141-287 2700)

HULL
PERMANENT ART GALLERY Helen Chadwick Wide range of work by the late photographer and artist. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 1.30pm-4.30pm (phone for Christmas opening). Ends 17 Jan. £1, child under 13 & Hull residents free. Queen Victoria Square (01482-613902)

LEEDS
HENRY MOORE INSTITUTE Las Cambalanges: Auguste Rodin Drawings made during the Royal Cambodian dance company's tour to France in 1966. Mon-Sat 10am-5.30pm, Wed 10am-9pm (phone for Christmas opening), ends 20 Feb. £3-£10. The Headrow (0113-234 3158)

LIVERPOOL
TATE GALLERY Liverpool: A Mythology. Salvador Dali Major work by the Spanish surrealist. Tue-Sat & Bank Hols 10am-6pm (phone for Christmas opening), ends 31 Jan. £5, concs £2.50. Albert Dock (0151-709 3223)

MANCHESTER
WHITWORTH ART GALLERY Chris Offill Challenging paintings inspired by the black tradition. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2pm-5pm (phone for Christmas opening), ends 30 Jan. free. Surrey Street (0114-273 5158)

SHEFFIELD
GRAVES ART GALLERY Double Gate Restraints of the artist's work. Tue-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 11am-5pm, Sat 11am-5pm, Sun 1.30pm-5pm (phone for Christmas opening), ends 30 Dec. £3.75, £2.25 under £1.50. Castlegate (01904-655543)

YORK
FAIRFAX HOUSE Heritage Re-gained Pieces of silver from the Gilbert Collection. Mon-Thur 11am-5pm, Sat 11am-5pm, Sun 1.30pm-5pm (phone for Christmas opening), ends 30 Dec. £3.75, £2.25 under £1.50. Castlegate (01904-655543)

YORK CITY ART GALLERY Venice Through Canaletto's Eyes Twelve paintings and drawings by the Venetian artist. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2pm-5pm (closed Dec 25), ends 3 Jan. free. Exhibition Square (01904-551861)

CLASSICAL

BIRMINGHAM
SYMPHONY HALL CBSO/Robertson Messiah's massive ten-movement Turgenev. 22 Dec. 7.30pm. £6-£31. City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Christmas Concerts Conductor Simon Halsey and narrator Willard White. 19, 21 & 23 Dec. 7.30pm. £6-£31. Lesley Garrett's Christmas Collection Accompanied by the BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by Peter Robinson. 20 Dec. 8pm. £30. Broad Street (0121-212 3333)

EDINBURGH
THE QUEEN'S HALL Cappella Nova/Caris By Candlelight Celebrate the spirit of Christmas with carols. 19 Dec. 7.30pm. £4-£12, concs available. John Currie Singers And Orchestra With Harp Consort. 20 Dec. 7.45pm. £9, concs £5. Clerk Street (0131-668 2019/c 667 7776)

MANCHESTER
BRIDGEWATER HALL Carol Concert The Hall's conducted by Brian Kay. 19 Dec. 7.30pm & 20 Dec. 3pm & 7.30pm. £6-£28. Halifax Choral Society/Prize-Jones With Manchester Concert Orchestra in Handel's Messiah. 22 Dec. 7.45pm. £12.50-£27.50. Lover Mosley Street (0161-907 9000)

YORK
ST MICHAEL-LE-BELFREY Yorkshire Choir & Baroque Soloists/Seymour Music for Christmas by JS Bach. 19 Dec. 7.30pm. £10-£13. (01904-659338)

YORK MINSTER Palmody: The Parley of Instruments Christmas music from English parish churches 1740-1800. 20 Dec. 7.30pm. £12, concs £10. Deansgate (01904-671818)

GLASGOW
THEATRE ROYAL Handel And Grellet Mark Tindler directs Scottish Opera's production of Humperdink's musical fairytale. 19, 22 & 23 Dec. 7.15pm. £3.50-£45.50, concs available. Hope Street (0141-332 9000)

LEEDS
GRAND THEATRE Carmen Phyllida Lloyd's vibrant production of Bizet's evergreen classic for Opera North. 19 Dec. 6pm, 21 Dec. 7.15pm. £5-£12. New Briggate (0113-222 6222)

LEEDS
BACK TO BASICS AT THE MINT Club Tonight featuring Mark Parfitt. 19 Dec. 9.30pm-1am. £10, mms £8. Harrison Street (0113-244 3168)

MANCHESTER
FRESHLY SQUEEZED AT BAND ON THE WALL Supreme Saturday night funk with live music from Sanches. 19 Dec. 9.30pm-1am. £6, Swan Street (0161-633 0682)

EDINBURGH
FESTIVAL THEATRE Scottish Ballet: Cinderella John Fraser's version of the classic fairytale. 21, 22 & 23 Dec. 2.30pm, £4.50-£30, concs available. Scottish Ballet Theatre, 21, 22 & 23 Dec. 2.30pm, £4.50-£30, concs available. Ashton's splintered ballet featuring Yuriko Shimomura. 19 Dec. 2.30pm & 7.30pm. £4.50-£30, concs available. Nicolson Street (0131-529 6000)

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LITERATURE

BIRMINGHAM
WOMEN'S PLAYWRITING WORKSHOP Learn to write for the theatre. Creative Writing styles and genres. Cresswell Theatre Southbridge Drive (0141-950 3437/3438) 21 Dec. 7pm-9pm. £48 for 16 classes.

ILKLEY
WAYS INTO WRITING (OVER 185) A supportive class aimed at developing writing styles and genres. Manor House Art Gallery and Museum Castle Yard (01943-600066) Tue 10.30am-1pm, ends 9 Feb. £82 for course, concs.

STIRLING
ADAM MCNAUGHTON The poet and singer/songwriter talks about Glasgow singing traditions. Stirling Smith Art Gallery And Museum Dumbarton Road (01766-471917) 21 Dec. 7.30pm. £3, concs £2.

BIRMINGHAM
THE GLEE CLUB Perrier not Peter Kay Junior Simpson, McCarthy, Noel Britten. 15 Bpm. £12. Youngs Barry Night with Perrier. Junior Simpson, Kevin McCarthy, Sean Percival. 22 Dec. 8pm. Hurst Street (0121-693 2248) £29.50 inc 3 course meal.

LEICESTER
JOCELYN LEICESTER Aussie funnyman Phil Davey, Gina Yashere, Sean Percival, Brian Higgins. 19 Dec. 7.45pm, Granby Street (0845-6081818) £10.

MANCHESTER
AL MURRAY - THE PUB LANDLORD AT FROG & BUCKET Barking character comedy from the author of The Pub Landlord. 19 Dec. 8.30pm. £7 adv. £8 door.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
HYENA CAFE COMEDY Anvil Spraggs, American comic Reg Hunter and Milton Jones. 19 Dec. 9pm, Leazes Arcade, Leazes Lane (0191-232 6030) £8 adv. £9 door inc food.

GLASGOW
THEATRE ROYAL Handel And Grellet Mark Tindler directs Scottish Opera's production of Humperdink's musical fairytale. 19, 22 & 23 Dec. 7.15pm. £3.50-£45.50, concs available. Hope Street (0141-332 9000)

CHRISTMAS EVE TELEVISION

BBC1

- 7.00** News (3596601). **7.30** Tooth Fairies (5992415). **7.45** Teletubbies (5993057). **7.50** Moomin (5930568). **8.05** Teletubbies (7242057). **8.30** Blue Peter (6204065). **8.55** Sweet Valley High (5923502). **9.30** Fairs Game (5937785). **9.55** Teletubbies (5992417). **10.20** News (59343057).
- 10.30** **FILM** All I Want for Christmas (1991). Leslie Nielsen stars as Santa in this family comedy (S) (T) (577328).
- 11.55** **News** (5996601). **12.45** Good Neighbours (S) (9189415). **12.55** News (S) (9189415). **1.00** Neighbours (S) (9189415).
- 1.35** **FILM** Lassic: A New Generation (1994). Family drama (S) (T) (7725647).
- 3.05** **Live and Kicking** Mystery Toons Kids' special (S) (T) (5570231).
- 3.45** **FILM** The Santa Clause (1994). Smarmy toy salesman Tim Allen is groomed for Santa Claus duties by some North Pole elves (S) (T) (181873).
- 5.15** **Neighbours** (S) (T) (5734502).
- 5.40** **Whatever You Want for Christmas** (S) (T) (223786).
- 6.30** **News** (T) (645).
- 7.00** **Celebrity Ready, Steady, Cook!** Culinary challenge (S) (T) (6347).
- 7.30** **EastEnders** (S) (T) (279).
- 8.00** **Animal Hospital** (S) (T) (5095).
- 8.30** **Birds of a Feather** (S) (T) (553328).
- 9.30** **News** (T) (662501).
- 9.30** **Jonathan Creek** (S) (T) (55637).
- 11.00** **The Frank Skinner Christmas Show** (S) (T) (731163).
- 11.40** **Christmas is Coming** (S) (T) (812502).
- 12.40** **FILM** Carry On Again, Doctor (1963). Bedpan humour (T) (7493835).
- 2.10** **News 24** (59401670). To 6am.

BBC2

- 6.30** **FILM** Modern Times (1936). Chaplin's last silent film (784762).
- 7.35** **FILM** Key Largo (1948). Hoodlum Edward G. Robinson is holed up in storm-swept Florida hotel with Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall (T) (9768878).
- 9.15** **FILM** One Magic Christmas (1985). Seasonal fare (S) (T) (880616).
- 10.40** **FILM** To Have and Have Not (1944). Humphrey Bogart helps the Free French (T) (4565789).
- 12.20** **Flex the Runt** (S) (T) (5647453). **12.30** **Flex the Runt** (S) (T) (5647453). **12.40** **The West** (S) (T) (728618).
- 2.05** **FILM** Shenandoah (1965). Virginia farmer James Stewart's family is torn apart during the Civil War (T) (888415).
- 3.45** **Choice of the Year** (S) (T) (4580368). **4.25** **Choice of the Year** (S) (T) (4580368). **5.40** **The Simpsons** (S) (T) (57705). **6.05** **Flex the Runt** (S) (T) (5647453). **6.45** **The Simpsons** (S) (T) (57705).
- 6.35** **HOME** It's a Wonderful Life (1946). James Stewart stars in Frank Capra's classic Christmas fantasy. See Choice, below (T) (79724434).
- 8.40** **Dear John - a Tribute to John Wells**. An affectionate profile of the late satirist (S) (T) (561818).
- 9.30** **The Search for Shogun-ia**. A fascinating film documenting historian Charles Allen's attempts to prove the existence of Shogun-ia (S) (T) (444521).
- 10.20** **Meetings with Remarkable Trees** (S) (T) (551016).
- 10.30** **The Moonstone**. Wilkie Collins' classic detective story. An heiress is given a priceless diamond - stolen from a shrine in India by her uncle - but it brings with it a curse. Patricia Hodge heads the cast (F) (S) (T) (89645724).
- 12.40** **FILM** The Haunting (1963). Psychic investigators visit a Boston mansion. With Claire Bloom and Julie Harris (T) (256909). To 2.35am.

ITV Granada

- 6.00** **GMTV** (593537). **9.25** **News** (T) (4200618). **9.35** **Tiny Toons** (R) (S) (T) (878511). **10.00** **Rocky and the Dodos** (R) (S) (T) (878511). **10.15** **Art Attack** Christmas Cracker (R) (S) (T) (5927250).
- 10.50** **FILM** The Snow Queen (1956). Animated version of the glistening fairytale (S) (T) (5793540).
- 12.20** **Granada News** (5841275). **12.30** **News** (45732). **1.00** **Emmerdale** (97386). **1.30** **Charlotte Church - Voice of an Angel** (58273). **2.00** **Paddington** (77737328). **2.40** **Animaniacs** (7058827). **2.55** **Hey Arnold!** (582840). **3.00** **In the House with Cleopatra** (1973). **4.00** **Granada News** (5838883). **4.30** **Carols for Christmas** (5440665). **4.35** **Nutcracker** (547705). **5.00** **News** (Weather) (T) (581812).
- 5.15** **FILM** Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit (1993). Whoopi Goldberg stars in this comedy sequel (S) (T) (5804892).
- 7.00** **Emmerdale** (S) (T) (415).
- 7.30** **The Bill** (T) (69811).
- 8.30** **Heartbeat**. Drama series. Mysterious events make a woman believe her baby is about to die (S) (T) (54453).
- 9.30** **The Ruth Rendell Mysteries: You Can't Be Too Careful**. Crime drama (S) (T) (5063347).
- 10.35** **News** (Weather) (T) (737360). **10.50** **This is Celine Dion** (T) (531827). **11.30** **Christmas Glory** (T) (43869).
- 12.30** **FILM** Brief Encounter (1945). Celia Johnson has an illicit yet unconsummated affair with a married doctor, Trevor Howard (T) (525854).
- 2.05** **FILM** Christmas on Division Street (1991). Social-conscience drama (284090).
- 3.50** **FILM** Speaks Rn Wild (1941). Horror comedy (579682).
- 5.05** **Hurricanes** (S) (T) (7844293). **5.30** **Murphy's White Christmas** (R) (773212). **5.55** **News** (5933361). To 6am.

Channel 4

- 7.00** **For Better or for Worse** (59367). **7.30** **The Magic Keeper** (75144). **8.00** **The Big Breakfast** (S) (T) (40993). **10.00** **Suzi** (50347). **10.30** **Earls, Indiana** (S) (T) (5826724). **10.55** **Secret World of Alex Mack** (R) (S) (T) (415366). **11.30** **Mosha** (S) (T) (5827). **12.00** **Madison** (5846637). **12.30** **Ted Hughes: In His Own Words** (R) (S) (T) (440221). **1.05** **The Real Nativity Show** (R) (T) (4540428).
- 2.05** **FILM** Annie (1982). Little orphan Allen Quin finds happiness in this rosy musical (T) (5759085).
- 4.30** **The Snowman** (T) (960). **5.00** **The Bear** (521). **5.30** **Countdown** (T) (540).
- 6.00** **A Perfect Carry On** (R) (T) (13453).
- 7.00** **Heroes of Comedy**. A tribute to Tony Hancock, one of Britain's best-loved comedians (R) (S) (T) (7163).
- 8.00** **Burnt Bits**. Entertaining compilation of TV cookery mishaps (T) (5705).
- 8.30** **The Christmas Italian Kitchen**. A look at desserts and festive treats for the sweet-toothed (T) (7340).
- 9.00** **Rising Damp** (R) (T) (7434).
- 9.30** **Father Ted Christmas Special**. Ted, Doug and other priests take a wrong turn during a shopping trip and find themselves lost in a lingerie department (R) (S) (T) (580988).
- 10.35** **Snow Graham Norton**. Graham Norton presents an over-the-top Christmas celebration (562750).
- 11.15** **David Blaine's Street Magic** (T) (56123).
- 12.10** **FILM** Black Christmas (1975). Atmospheric horror (741563).
- 2.00** **FILM** Theatre of Blood (1973). Entertaining black comedy (T) (539038).
- 3.50** **FILM** House of Wax (1953). Atmospheric thriller (539380).
- 5.25** **Gagarin** (281080). **5.35** **2 Stupid Dogs** (R) (S) (505265). **5.55** **Sesame Street** (R) (S) (5940477). To 7am.

Channel 5

- 6.00** **The Wind in the Willows** (R) (5777453). **6.30** **Roobarb** (R) (5777453). **6.30** **Dappledawn Farm** (R) (441360). **7.00** **Wimzie's House** (R) (S) (5854767). **7.30** **Mikshak** (S) (5854767). **7.35** **Havakazoo** (5928295). **8.00** **George of the Jungle** (7482250). **8.30** **What a Mess** (R) (592821). **9.00** **Loganheads** (7482250). **9.30** **USA High** (202231). **10.00** **The Gods of Olympus** (5974808). **10.20** **Sunset Beach** (S) (T) (585219). **11.00** **Leesa** (S) (334927). **11.55** **Postcards** (R) (5856637). **12.00** **5 News at Noon** (S) (T) (402657). **12.30** **Family Affairs** (5928347). **1.00** **The Bold Sons and Daughters** (5754960).
- 1.50** **FILM** A Different Kind of Christmas (1996). Shelley Long's dad thinks he's Santa Claus (S) (T) (5828786).
- 3.40** **FILM** The Adventures of Baron Munchausen (1988). John Neville stars as the braggart German officer in Terry Gilliam's epic fantasy (S) (T) (5808890).
- 6.00** **100 Per Cent** (S) (2238637).
- 6.30** **Family Affairs** (S) (T) (5757540).
- 7.00** **Project Grizzly** (T) (5419778).
- 8.00** **Xena: Warrior Princess** (2865927).
- 9.10** **FILM** Behind Closed Doors (1994). Lesley-Anne Down is spooked by an intruder in another interior thriller 'inspired' by classic 1950s chiller Les Diaboliques (S) (T) (5829057).
- 10.50** **Melinda's Big Night In** (2759163). **11.30** **Stags and Hens** (7913786).
- 12.30** **FILM** Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill! (1965). Russ Meyer's B-movie about a gang of violent motorcycle vikings (S) (2038729).
- 2.00** **FILM** The High Price of Passion (1986). Richard Gere is infatuated by a prostitute, Karen Young (S) (745671).
- 3.50** **Night Stand** (5592449). **4.30** **The Road** (782226). **4.40** **Prisoner: Cell Block H** (5018449). **5.00** **100 Per Cent** (S) (T) (5703458). To 5am.

ITV/Regions

- Anglia**
As Granada excepts 5.30 Carols (590448).
- Border**
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- Central**
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- Grampian**
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- ITV Wales**
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- ITV100**
As Granada excepts 5.30 Carols (590448).

THURSDAY CHOICE

TODAY IT'S almost everybody's favourite Christmas film, but back in 1946, audiences found Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (6.35pm BBC2) too syrupy and avoided it in droves. This year it might be too close to the bone for some owners of small businesses. James Stewart stars as a man on the verge of financial ruin and about commit suicide, when his guardian angel, played by Henry Travers, appears. He promptly takes Stewart on a heart-warming journey to show him what life would have been like if he'd never existed.



SATELLITE & CABLE

- Sky Premier**
6.00 The Wind in the Willows (5777453). 6.30 Roobarb (5777453). 6.30 Dappledawn Farm (441360). 7.00 Wimzie's House (5854767). 7.30 Mikshak (5854767). 7.35 Havakazoo (5928295). 8.00 George of the Jungle (7482250). 8.30 What a Mess (592821). 9.00 Loganheads (7482250). 9.30 USA High (202231). 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (5974808). 10.20 Sunset Beach (585219). 11.00 Leesa (334927). 11.55 Postcards (5856637). 12.00 5 News at Noon (402657). 12.30 Family Affairs (5928347). 1.00 The Bold Sons and Daughters (5754960).
- Sky One**
6.00 The Wind in the Willows (5777453). 6.30 Roobarb (5777453). 6.30 Dappledawn Farm (441360). 7.00 Wimzie's House (5854767). 7.30 Mikshak (5854767). 7.35 Havakazoo (5928295). 8.00 George of the Jungle (7482250). 8.30 What a Mess (592821). 9.00 Loganheads (7482250). 9.30 USA High (202231). 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (5974808). 10.20 Sunset Beach (585219). 11.00 Leesa (334927). 11.55 Postcards (5856637). 12.00 5 News at Noon (402657). 12.30 Family Affairs (5928347). 1.00 The Bold Sons and Daughters (5754960).
- Sky Two**
6.00 The Wind in the Willows (5777453). 6.30 Roobarb (5777453). 6.30 Dappledawn Farm (441360). 7.00 Wimzie's House (5854767). 7.30 Mikshak (5854767). 7.35 Havakazoo (5928295). 8.00 George of the Jungle (7482250). 8.30 What a Mess (592821). 9.00 Loganheads (7482250). 9.30 USA High (202231). 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (5974808). 10.20 Sunset Beach (585219). 11.00 Leesa (334927). 11.55 Postcards (5856637). 12.00 5 News at Noon (402657). 12.30 Family Affairs (5928347). 1.00 The Bold Sons and Daughters (5754960).
- Sky Three**
6.00 The Wind in the Willows (5777453). 6.30 Roobarb (5777453). 6.30 Dappledawn Farm (441360). 7.00 Wimzie's House (5854767). 7.30 Mikshak (5854767). 7.35 Havakazoo (5928295). 8.00 George of the Jungle (7482250). 8.30 What a Mess (592821). 9.00 Loganheads (7482250). 9.30 USA High (202231). 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (5974808). 10.20 Sunset Beach (585219). 11.00 Leesa (334927). 11.55 Postcards (5856637). 12.00 5 News at Noon (402657). 12.30 Family Affairs (5928347). 1.00 The Bold Sons and Daughters (5754960).
- Sky Four**
6.00 The Wind in the Willows (5777453). 6.30 Roobarb (5777453). 6.30 Dappledawn Farm (441360). 7.00 Wimzie's House (5854767). 7.30 Mikshak (5854767). 7.35 Havakazoo (5928295). 8.00 George of the Jungle (7482250). 8.30 What a Mess (592821). 9.00 Loganheads (7482250). 9.30 USA High (202231). 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (5974808). 10.20 Sunset Beach (585219). 11.00 Leesa (334927). 11.55 Postcards (5856637). 12.00 5 News at Noon (402657). 12.30 Family Affairs (5928347). 1.00 The Bold Sons and Daughters (5754960).
- Sky Five**
6.00 The Wind in the Willows (5777453). 6.30 Roobarb (5777453). 6.30 Dappledawn Farm (441360). 7.00 Wimzie's House (5854767). 7.30 Mikshak (5854767). 7.35 Havakazoo (5928295). 8.00 George of the Jungle (7482250). 8.30 What a Mess (592821). 9.00 Loganheads (7482250). 9.30 USA High (202231). 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (5974808). 10.20 Sunset Beach (585219). 11.00 Leesa (334927). 11.55 Postcards (5856637). 12.00 5 News at Noon (402657). 12.30 Family Affairs (5928347). 1.00 The Bold Sons and Daughters (5754960).
- Sky Six**
6.00 The Wind in the Willows (5777453). 6.30 Roobarb (5777453). 6.30 Dappledawn Farm (441360). 7.00 Wimzie's House (5854767). 7.30 Mikshak (5854767). 7.35 Havakazoo (5928295). 8.00 George of the Jungle (7482250). 8.30 What a Mess (592821). 9.00 Loganheads (7482250). 9.30 USA High (202231). 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (5974808). 10.20 Sunset Beach (585219). 11.00 Leesa (334927). 11.55 Postcards (5856637). 12.00 5 News at Noon (402657). 12.30 Family Affairs (5928347). 1.00 The Bold Sons and Daughters (5754960).
- Sky Seven**
6.00 The Wind in the Willows (5777453). 6.30 Roobarb (5777453). 6.30 Dappledawn Farm (441360). 7.00 Wimzie's House (5854767). 7.30 Mikshak (5854767). 7.35 Havakazoo (5928295). 8.00 George of the Jungle (7482250). 8.30 What a Mess (592821). 9.00 Loganheads (7482250). 9.30 USA High (202231). 10.00 The Gods of Olympus (5974808). 10.20 Sunset Beach (585219). 11.00 Leesa (334927). 11.55 Postcards (5856637). 12.00 5 News at Noon (402657). 12.30 Family Affairs (5928347). 1.00 The Bold Sons and Daughters (5754960).
- Sky Eight**
6.00 The Wind in the Willows (5777453). 6.30 Roobarb (5777453). 6.30 Dappledawn Farm (441360). 7.00 Wimzie's House (585476

TUESDAY TELEVISION

BBC1

- 6.00 Business Breakfast** (80483). **7.00 News** (T) (50877). **9.00 Sweet Valley High** (R) (78176). **9.25 The Famine Game** (R) (78176). **9.55 Teletubbies** (S) (80780). **10.20 News** (T) (80906).
- 10.30 FILM The Nutcracker Prince** (1990). Seasonal cartoon set to Tchaikovsky's music (S) (T) (89364).
- 11.40 New Adventures of Superman** (70367). **12.25 Wipeout** (89918). **12.50 Weather Show** (738273). **1.00 News** (53754). **1.30 Regional News** (457620). **1.40 Neighbours** (977539). **2.05 Battersea Dogs' Home** (880355). **2.30 Due South** (288532). **3.20 Noddy** (R) (S) (80780). **3.30 Casper** (32274). **3.50 CrutcheVision** (522208). **4.40 Noelle Island** (31971). **4.55 Cartoon Critics** (952183). **5.00 Newsround** (208507). **5.40 11 Never Work** (887107).
- 5.35 Neighbours** (S) (T) (829890).
- 6.00 News; Weather** (T) (445).
- 6.30 Regional News** (T) (975).
- 7.00 Holiday: Fasten Your Seat Belt.** Christmas special (S) (T) (873).
- 7.30 EastEnders** (S) (T) (209).
- 8.00 Airport at Christmas** (S) (T) (5483).
- 8.30 Mysteries with Carol Vorderman.** True-life stories (S) (T) (4990).
- 9.00 News; Weather** (T) (8984).
- 9.30 FILM Speed** (1994). Keanu Reeves stars in this thriller, with Sandra Bullock and Dennis Hopper (S) (T) (28716).
- 11.20 Celine Dion: These Are Special Times** (S) (80025).
- 12.00 FILM Staying Alive** (1983). John Travolta stars in this sequel to Saturday Night Fever (T) (1859).
- 1.30 FILM Sixteen Candles** (1984). Molly Ringwald stars as a teenager dreaming of Mr Right (T) (89101).
- 3.00 News 24** (542802). To 6am.

BBC2

- 7.00 The Little Polar Bear** (R) (S) (80328). **7.05 Teletubbies** (503803). **7.30 Yo-Yo's Treasure Hunt** (R) (87490). **7.50 Blue Peter** (S) (T) (88900). **8.45 Eek the Cat** (503813). **8.50 Teletubbies** (503813). **9.00 Animal Winter Warmers** (594209). **12.00 Tales of Canterbury** (51735). **12.30 The Simpsons** (R) (S) (T) (890387). **1.35 Rex the Runt** (S) (T) (718717). **1.55 Rex the Runt** (S) (T) (718717). **1.55 Tinseltown** (S) (T) (890387). **2.25 The West** (S) (T) (890387). **2.50 News** (T) (897235).
- 3.55 FILM El Dorado** (1997). John Wayne helps drunken sheriff Robert Mitchum clean up a town (T) (893745).
- 6.00 The Simpsons** (S) (T) (84025).
- 6.25 Rex the Runt** (S) (T) (273261).
- 6.35 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine.** Jake and Nog risk an intergalactic incident through an innocent attempt to lift Seko's spirits (S) (T) (273261).
- 7.20 Rex the Runt** (S) (T) (24803).
- 7.30 The Canterbury Tales.** Second part of the beautifully animated film opens with the pilgrims nearing Canterbury (S) (T) (551).
- 8.00 Food and Drink.** A Christmas meal for vegetarians (S) (T) (3025).
- 8.30 CHOICE Two Fat Ladies.** Jennifer and Claes cook for a polo team, then go skiing. See Choice, below (S) (T) (2532).
- 9.00 Butterflies.** Festive edition of the Seven Seas sitcom (R) (T) (2754).
- 9.30 CHOICE Agas and their Owners.** See Choice, below (S) (T) (2720).
- 10.20 A Woman Called Smith.** (R) (S) (T) (7174). **10.30 Newsnight** (T) (89261). **11.15 Brothers and Sisters** (S) (843358).
- 11.55 FILM Hidden Fortress** (1958). Kurosawa's enthralling drama set during the civil wars in medieval Japan. With Toshirō Mifune. (S) (819537). To 2.5am.

ITV Granada

- 6.00 GMTV** (108193). **9.25 News** (T) (433974). **9.35 Tiny Toons** (R) (S) (T) (194667). **10.00 Rocky and the Dodos** (R) (S) (330835). **10.15 Art Attack** (Christmas Cracker) (R) (S) (T) (595483).
- 10.45 FILM The Never-ending Story** (1984). Children's adventure (S) (T) (8591055).
- 12.20 Granada News** (T) (877035). **12.30 News** (T) (81464). **1.00 Coronation Street** (R) (T) (48822). **1.30 Emmerdale** (R) (S) (T) (89537). **2.00 Wheel of Fortune** (S) (T) (7087). **2.30 News** (T) (7908980). **4.40 Survival Special** (S) (T) (532761). **5.40 News** (88876).
- 5.55 Granada Tonight** (T) (8143006).
- 7.00 Emmerdale** (S) (T) (1803).
- 7.30 The Mall** (T) (877).
- 8.00 The Bill** (T) (2629).
- 9.00 Catherine Cookson's Colour Blind.** James and Bridget's daughter has grown up into a beautiful young woman but her skin colour and the economic depression makes it difficult for her to get a job (S) (T) (5193).
- 10.00 News; Weather** (T) (295919).
- 10.35 Granada News** (T) (74087).
- 10.25 The Things You Do for Love.** Reconciles an extraordinary love story (T) (272390).
- 11.30 In Search of Tarzan with Jonathan Ross** (S) (T) (956071).
- 12.35 FILM Tarzan the Magnificent** (1980). Gordon Scott stars (T) (800323).
- 2.40 The Haunted Fish Tank** (8859033).
- 2.35 FILM Ernest Saves Christmas** (1988). Silly seasonal slapstick for youngsters (71575).
- 4.00 ITV Nightscreen** (4468781). **5.00 Football League Extra** (512358). **5.55 Morning News** (9406217). To 6am.

Channel 4

- 7.00 For Better or Worse** (47193). **7.30 The Magic School Bus** (53700). **8.00 The Big Breakfast** (14799). **10.00 Planet Pop** (64230). **10.30 Serie Indiana** (555250). **10.55 The Secret World of Alex Mack** (R) (S) (424822). **11.30 Moesha** (5067). **12.00 Madison** (48803).
- 12.30 FILM The Thief of Baghdad** (1940). Sabu outwits the wicked vizier, Conrad Veidt, in this vintage Arabian Nights adventure (T) (40342).
- 2.30 Frances Russell's West Coast Christmas** (R) (S) (T) (754). **3.00 Wine Hunt** (T) (7464). **3.30 Tool Stories** (T) (241). **4.00 Fifteen to One Highlights** (T) (826). **4.30 Countdown** (S) (T) (855532). **4.55 Ricki Lake** (S) (T) (7841087).
- 5.30 Pet Rescue Awards** (S) (T) (842).
- 6.00 Ted Viles TV.** One-off comedy special about a hideous male magazine, played by Sean Cullen (T) (87025).
- 7.00 News; Weather** (T) (34193).
- 7.15 FILM The Enemy Below** (1957). A tense U-boat drama starring Robert Mitchum (T) (522323).
- 9.00 Last Orders.** Behind-the-scenes look at a hospital to report on the toll alcohol takes on the nation's health (T) (3735).
- 10.00 Friends** (R) (S) (T) (47532).
- 10.30 Eurotrash Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells.** Seasonal sauce (T) (446209).
- 11.05 This Boko Walks Into a Bar** (T) (31716). **11.20 All Back to Mine** with Paul Weller (T) (892507). **12.40 Righteous Babes** (844675).
- 1.40 FILM The Desperate Hours** (1955). Sadistic Humphrey Bogart and his two cronies take over the suburban home of Fredric March (T) (47472).
- 3.40 Dispatches** (R) (931410). **4.05 Homicide: Life on the Street** (R) (S) (444104). **4.55 The Grumpy Show** (R) (S) (1434420). **5.10 Sharky and George** (R) (790530). **5.30 2 Stupid Dogs** (R) (S) (973678). To 6am.

Channel 5

- 6.00 5 News and Sport** (S) (816548). **7.00 Wimpie's House** (R) (891551). **7.30 Mikhalah** (255555). **7.35 Havakazoo** (612754). **8.00 George of the Jungle** (753806). **8.30 What a Mess** (753717). **9.00 Loggisheds** (753827). **9.30 USA High** (2158087). **10.00 The Gods of Olympus** (900346). **10.20 Sunset Beach** (2041795). **11.00 Leeza** (841343). **11.55 Postcards** (9985193). **12.00 5 News** (753193). **12.30 Family Affairs** (2158087). **1.00 Bold and the Beautiful** (9152803). **1.30 Per Cent Gold** (1432754). **2.30 Good Afternoon** (2106629).
- 3.30 FILM The Christmas Gift** (1986). Seasonal slush starring the late John Denver, with a time-warped town in the Rockies (T) (7554716).
- 5.20 The Roseanne Show** (9038648).
- 6.00 100 Per Cent** (S) (2367193).
- 6.30 Family Affairs** (S) (T) (2358445).
- 7.00 5 News** (S) (T) (1303432).
- 7.30 Wild at Home.** Wildlife documentary about the Fossil Rim Wildlife Centre in Dallas, Texas (S) (T) (2354629).
- 8.00 Are You Being Cheated?** With Charlotte Hudson (S) (T) (412990).
- 8.30 What Went Wrong?** Videos of real-life disasters (S) (T) (412990).
- 9.00 Lonesome Dove.** Last part of the western mini-series. The outfit is shocked by their recent loss but continue into buffalo territory, where Gus is surrounded by hostile Indians and is wounded (T) (3855851).
- 10.50 Full Moon Party.** Report on how Thailand has become a magnet for backpackers (S) (T) (8670785).
- 11.50 Leeza** (106396). **12.30 Live and Dangerous** (S) (767496). **1.40 Live and Dangerous** (S) (767496). **2.45 Asian Football Show** (8156323). **4.40 Prisoner: Cell Block H** (3559975). **5.30 100 Per Cent** (R) (S) (7079704). To 6am.

ITV/Regions

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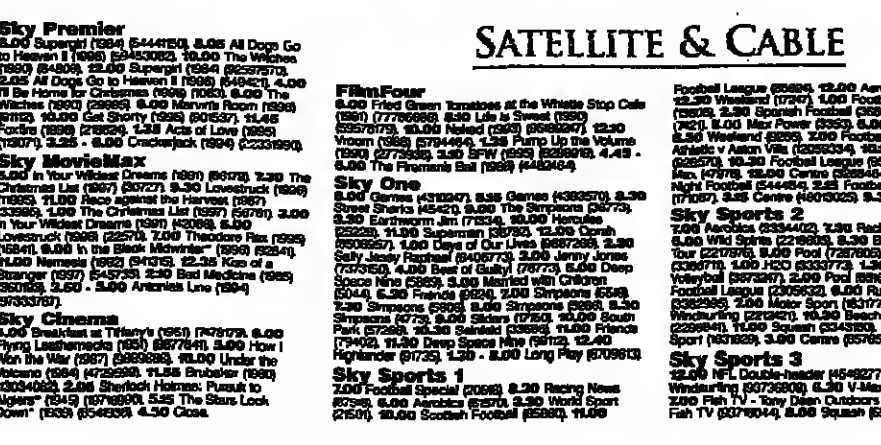
CARLTON'S Frenchman's Creek (8pm ITV, left) benefits from the fact that it's an adaptation of a Daphne du Maurier story. It also has an unusual historical setting – the Glorious Revolution, when William and Mary succeeded to the throne of England. **Everyman** (10.45pm BBC1) goes further back, to the ninth century, when an English woman pulled off one of the greatest con tricks in history. Dressed as a man, she tricked her way into the Vatican and reigned for two years – or so medieval writers tell us.

[illegible]

ITV/Region

- 6.00 5 News and Sport (S)** (198979Z, 7.00 Winzles House (R) (6361679), 7.30 Mikshaki (S) (2561679), 7.35 Havalakzo (S) (650082), **8.00** George of the Jungle (R) (7561334, 8.30 What-a-Mess (756005), 9.00 Loggahedds (S) (7561657), **9.30** Uda Oghy (R) (S) (216135), **10.00** The Gods of High (S) (936787), **10.20** Sunset (S) (7561655), **10.40** Lezza (R) (S) (647003), **12.00** 5 News at Noon (S) (T) (756421), **12.30** Family Affairs (S) (T) (216131), **1.00** The Bold and the Beautiful (S) (T) (694850), **1.30** Sons and Daughters (216402), **2.00** 100 Per Cent Gold (S) (146502), **2.30** Good Afternoon (S) (216957).
- 3.30 FILM: Babykakes** (1969, Fat mortuary attendant Ricki Lake sets her sights at the man of her dreams. (S) (T) (7587044).
- 5.20 The Roseanne Show.** (6061976).
- 5.00 100 Per Cent.** (S) (2360421).
- 3.30 Family Affairs.** (S) (T) (2367773).
- 7.00 5 News.** (S) (T) (1466670).
- 7.30 Wild at Home.** Film about the Royal Bed of Britain - the swan. (S) (T) (937857).
- 8.00 Ugly Uncorked.** Keith's slurps his way through the last of the series. (S) (T) (1469259).
- 9.30 Weather Front.** Will we have a white Christmas this year? Experts give their views (S) (T) (1464353).
- 9.00 Lonesome Dove.** Third part of the mini-series about the great American frontier in the late 19th-century. Gus tries to comfort the devastated Lorena and is later reunited with his beloved Clara. (T) (8861934).
- 0.50 FILM: Lap Dance** (1995). Elizabeth Wagner pays the bills by stripping off in a seedy club. With Arthur Emmett (8957897).
- 12.25 NFL American Football - Live:** Miami Dolphins vs Denver Broncos (S) (3343137), **4.40** Prisoner Cell Block H (198973), **5.30** 100 Per Cent
- Angels**
As Goddesses except: 12.30 Angels News (198973), 10.00 Dinosaurs (19844, 2.35 Angels News (198973), 3.40 Bachelors (216402), 3.55 Angels News and Weather (89395), 10.50 Angels News and Weather (89395), 11.00 Angels News and Weather (89395), 11.10 Angels News and Weather (89395), 11.20 Angels News and Weather (89395), 11.30 Angels News and Weather (89395), 11.40 Angels News and Weather (89395), 11.50 Angels News and Weather (89395), 12.00 Angels News and Weather (89395), 12.10 Angels News and Weather (89395), 12.20 Angels News and Weather (89395), 12.30 Angels News and Weather (89395), 12.40 Angels News and Weather (89395), 12.50 Angels News and Weather (89395), 1.00 Angels News and Weather (89395), 1.10 Angels News and Weather (89395), 1.20 Angels News and Weather (89395), 1.30 Angels News and Weather (89395), 1.40 Angels News and Weather (89395), 1.50 Angels News and Weather (89395), 2.00 Angels News and Weather (89395), 2.10 Angels News and Weather (89395), 2.20 Angels News and 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THE LATEST project from Aardman Animations, *Rex the Runt* (6.25pm and 7.15pm BBC2, left), is disappointing. The Plasticine animation is fantastic, but rather less care and attention has been spent on the script. *The Canterbury Tales* (7.30pm BBC2) obviously suffers from no such deficiency. The pilgrims are modelled out of Plasticine, but their tales are designed in the mish-mash of styles we learnt to love in *Shakespeare – the Animated Tales* (another product of Moscovis's Christmas Films).

[illegible]



JASPER REES

TELEVISION REVIEW

AFTER WATCHING the London episode of *Friends* last week, I wrote this, at least in terms of comedy, the special relationship between British and American does not exist. Fresh evidence emerged this week that the friendship is definitely still in. We've heard a lot about the timing of Operation Desert Fox. The President checked his diary and locked the coordinates of the US attack force onto the day before the House of Representatives were to debate impeachment. But I have a hunch that, before he put the 'Majesty's air force at America's disposal, the Prime Minister entered the own set of coordinates. Most of the firepower was Bill's, so he got to choose the date. Tony was allowed to nominate the time. He plumped for 2200 GMT so that *News at Ten* (ITV, Wed) could go live to Downing Street for the PM's statement.

Like Saddam, ITV has been a bit off-message lately, what with talk of decapitating *News at Ten* to obliterate its leading to allow more room for dramas in which Robson Green gets other people's wives into bed. By giving the bit of sick, ITV could show their bosses at TV a carrot, see this is where you get it, you hang around these parts. On *Newsnight* (BBC2, Wed) Gordon Brewer directed our attention to the slats of the action from Baghdad. For a moment, all you could see on his screen was blackness, with the faces of *Newsnight's* guests reflected in it. It looked like an unwitting admission of television's relative relationship with the news. It points its camera at something, and all it can see is itself.

The morning after the night before, *The Big Breakfast* (CA, Thurs) raked over the coals. Any news stories this morning, asked Johnny Vaughan, Vaughan was playing it more breezily than usual because, the night before, he too had looked on helplessly as his lipply chair had been chewed up and spit out by a woman, Johnny Meets Madonna (CA, Wed) was even more of an embarrassing than his

encounter with the cast of *Friends*. He spent 60 minutes on a sofa with a lump of ice which no amount of eyebrow-cocking could melt. It makes you wonder whether the qualities which make people ideal presenters of *The Big Breakfast* make them constitutionally unsuitable for other sorts of television and vice versa. Chris Evans is the only exception I can think of. Danes (the Outen) is about to leave the show for pastures new. On the available evidence, you worry for her. First there was the disastrous *Bates in the Wood*, then last month's appalling *Men for Sale*, and now there's *The Bill* (ITV, Fri). Van Outen was playing a gangster's moll. I place because she was the blonde plaything of not one but two implausible books. We only met one of them, but he was implausible enough for the part of them. He was played by Leslie Grantham, a man who knows a thing or two about making the mistake of leaving a hit show. I don't watch *The Bill* much and every time I do I'm reminded why. Because so many characters pass through the show, they are constantly leaving to tell you about themselves, leaving them little time actually to be themselves. The upshot in this instance was that time ran out before Grantham could confront Van Outen with her infidelity. It would have been her big scene, a chance to show what she could do. So that may be why they never got round to it.

John Galt (BBC2, Fri) brought the musician back to the chapel in the Brycon Beacons where he learnt to play the organ. The Welsh are the most inward-looking of the British nationalities, and have a consequent inactivity of their own industry. The programme interviewed a farmer who was at school with Galt, and had vaguely heard that Galt called Andy Warhol. For anyone with a speck of Welsh blood in them, it was morale boosting to see that Galt still has a special relationship with the land of our fathers.

BBC1

BBC2

ITV LWT

Channel 4

Channel 5

- 7.00 A Fantastical Family Christmas** (R) (7) (501076). 7.25 *News*. Weather (628838).
- 7.30 Children's BBC**. Eek the Cat (R) (639780). 7.40 *The Wizard of Oz* (S) (7) (613808). 8.05 *Hero Turtles - The New Mutation* (S) (737787). 8.20 *The New Adventures of Superman* (R) (S) (7) (587242). 8.45 *Live and Mocking* (S) (6534006).
- 12.30 News**. Weather (7) (639487). 12.45 *Grandstand* (S) (633268). 12.50 *Football Focus* (200851). 1.20 *Speed Dating* (738243). 1.30 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 1.40 *Shiny* (452918). 2.05 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 2.30 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 2.40 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 3.05 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 3.15 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 3.25 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 3.35 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 3.45 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 3.55 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 4.05 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 4.15 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 4.25 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 4.35 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 4.45 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 4.55 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 5.05 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 5.15 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 5.25 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 5.35 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 5.45 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 5.55 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 6.05 *Reaching from Aspid* (738446). 6.15 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YOUR MONEY

HOW TO MAKE IT • HOW TO SPEND IT



Hands off our houses

A House of Lords ruling could enable families to avoid inheritance tax when passing homes to their children. But will this 'window of opportunity' last? Paul Slade reports

Hundreds of British families could escape paying inheritance tax when passing homes on to their children, thanks to a House of Lords ruling earlier this month. The Lords ruled that Lady Ingram, who died in 1989, was entitled to reduce the tax due from her estate. She did this by giving the freehold of her home, Hurst Lodge in Berkshire, to a family trust, but retaining the leasehold and continuing to live there rent-free.

Until now, the Inland Revenue has barred this practice by treating such transfers as gifts with reservation of benefit, which could be ignored when the giver dies. If the gift was ignored, its value was treated as never having left the estate, and hence was subject to inheritance tax.

David Norman, principal consultant at KPMG Personal Financial Services, says: "What we seem to have now is confirmation that it is possible to do what Lady Ingram did, and that the gifts with reservation rules have limited application."

"How long that continues to be the case is another issue, because it is possible that the Revenue, smarting from this decision, will want to change the rules as soon as possible."

A Revenue spokesman confirms that they are already considering how costly the loophole opened by the Ingram ruling is likely to be: "We'll study the terms of this judgement carefully, and then we'll consider the implications for the inheritance tax rules. Ministers will then decide whether to make changes in the law."

Even if the Revenue does crack down, Norman thinks they are unlikely to do so retrospectively. This creates what he calls a "window of opportunity" between now and whenever the crackdown may come.



Keeping it in the family: there's now more chance of your children inheriting your home

Inheritance tax starts to bite on estates worth over £223,000 – not that huge a sum when you remember that it includes the value of your home. Genuine gifts made seven years or more before you die are exempt from the tax.

In Lady Ingram's case, the crucial part of the deal was the separation of freehold and leasehold title on the property. She gave away the freehold to a family trust in March 1987, but took in return a rent-free lease allowing her to continue living there.

When she died, aged 74, in February 1989, the Revenue argued that the 1987 transfer should be ignored as a gift with reservation. They said the inheritance tax due from her estate

should be calculated on the 1989 value, instead of the far lower 1987 value, which the estate argued should be used. The estate won.

In his 10 December judgement, Lord Hoffman said: "It is clear that the scope for discrimination in limiting the terms of the gift to exclude interests which the donor wishes to retain is very wide."

"In particular, the beneficial ownership of land may be divided in terms of time as well as space, so that the right of enjoyment of the land for a limited period and the right to enjoy the land after the expiry of that period can exist simultaneously. One interest may form the subject matter of a gift, while the other is retained."

On the face of it, the case would seem to suggest that, had Lady Ingram lived the full seven years after making her gift, the value of her home could have escaped inheritance tax altogether.

David Marcus, a partner at solicitors Jay Benning & Peltz, says that separating out the leasehold of a property when you own the freehold presents no problems in itself.

"If you own the freehold of a house, then – subject to planning and safety and things like that – you can almost do what you like," he says. "If you own the freehold, then you can grant whatever kind of lease you want to."

But this tactic is only open to those who have already cleared the mort-

gage. Your lender is likely to take a dim view of such moves if they still hold a stake in your house.

Sue Andersoo of the Council of Mortgage Lenders says: "They would no longer be lending on the same basis. They wouldn't necessarily have control of who ended up with the freehold interest in the property, and that could create all sorts of problems from a lending point of view."

Many people will however waste no time in following Lady Ingram's example, David Norman believes.

He says: "There are some people who have been waiting for this decision, and who will now go ahead. We're talking about people who have difficulty reducing their inheritance tax by straightforward gifts of cash or shares, simply because they need those assets to live on. Really, the only asset of any size which they could do something with is the house."

But there are dangers, as Norman points out: "The problem with inheritance tax planning is that you gift assets away to your children. There's the risk that they make bad marriages and, after the divorce settlement, suddenly half the money has gone. For many, the tax is a small price to pay for the peace of mind of continuing to own their home."

Although it was not part of the Ingram case, it seems quite likely that families could use the same methods to protect property assets from being sold to pay for care when older people go into residential homes. Older people may well be able to give away the freehold to their heirs, and retain a lease giving them the right to continue living at home. When they move into care only the leasehold value could be considered as part of their estate which local authorities have the right to claim to help pay for the costs of long-term care. But this may have to be tested separately in court.

BARGAIN HUNTER



CAR OF THE WEEK

Off road, on Trak

THIS IS a good time of the year to be hanging around the forecourt of your local Daihatsu dealer. Their best known model is the rugged Fourtrak off-roader, which established the company's reputation in rural Britain. Buy before the end of December and a 2.8 litre Turbo diesel TDX which retails for £19,500 is just £16,795, almost cost price. Dealers T W White & Sons (01372 450707) have vowed never to be beaten on price.

JAMES RUPPERT

PROPERTY OF THE WEEK

Music to your ears

BRON WENDA, a large detached house between Caernarfon and Bangor, has been refurbished by the present owners, who have made one of the three reception rooms into a music room. There's a 17ft lounge with stone fireplace, a cosy 13'6" sitting room and a breakfast room/kitchen fitted with oak-fronted units. Outside there's a double garage and mature gardens. The five-bedroom house had just had £10,000 knocked off the price, making it now £155,000. Details from Dafydd Hardy on 01248 371212.

ROSALIND RUSSELL

DEAL OF THE WEEK

Gold standard

THE ALLIANCE & Leicester is introducing a gold card version of its ground-breaking MoneyBack credit card, which offers cardholders an annual cheque instead of air miles, points or other rewards which can't be converted into cash. Launched on 4 January, it offers cashbacks of up to 4 per cent on selected goods from suppliers including Hertz, Going Places Holidayline, Ticketmaster, Winerack Direct and Interflora. There is no fee, the monthly interest rate is 17.4 per cent, but there is a minimum credit limit of £3,000, which rules out cautious spenders like me.

CLIFFORD GERMAN

Club together for finance fun

Investment clubs are a great way to learn the basics of the market. By Kirsty Greenwood

"IT'S A laugh, it's a few beers and it's a place to make money." This is Mark Goodson's opinion of investment clubs. Mr Goodson is the treasurer of H&G Investment Club (H and G stands for The Horse and Groom, the pub where the club meets). Investment clubs are groups of people, often novices to the world of stocks and shares, who pool their resources to invest in the stock market. The number of investment clubs in Britain is increasing rapidly. According to Finola Healy, head of communications at ProShare, an organisation promoting direct share ownership, there were 300 investment clubs affiliated to ProShare in December 1996. Today there are 2,800 affiliated clubs, and Ms Healy estimates there are another 200 non-affiliated clubs.

Ms Healy says: "We recommend that people start their own club, rather than joining an existing one. Where money is concerned it is best to be with friends that you can trust." The members vary greatly: "There is no typical investment club – they range from golfers and rugby players to housewives, city people and pensioners."

Most clubs first hold an exploratory meeting to discuss which companies they might invest in. Members then go away and track these companies. They pick a share and think: "If I bought this, how would it have done?" Members then invest just when they feel comfortable," says Ms Healy.

She stresses that no prior knowledge of the stock market is necessary: "For the most part, club members are initially novices. But most people will have knowledge of an industry. For example, someone going out shopping on

CLUBBABLE

FLYBOYS IS an investment club set up in April by the current and past members of the Cab Air College of Air Training Flight and Ground at Cranfield Airfield, Bedford.

Mike Dyson, head of training at the college and chairman of Flyboys says: "We currently hold our monthly meetings on the College's premises, but hope to shortly start meeting at a local hotel with a meal and drinks afterwards and make a social evening of it."

Flyboys currently has 17 members who initially invested £200 each in the club and now make a £20 monthly investment. They agreed that whenever the club has built up £1,100 of funds,

it would be invested in preselected companies.

"We have made no profits as of yet," adds Mr Dyson. "Due to the decline in share values since July, we are rather more down than up at the moment. We have the cash in the bank and are waiting for a down-turn in the market."

Mr Dyson's tip to anyone interested in setting up an investment club is to be more careful than Flyboys was – at least initially. "You should sit on your hands a bit more, take the medium- to long-term view, and not overreact to sudden falls in the market. We did – and it cost us quite a few pounds."

a regular basis will know about the fashion industry. Everyone in the club should take a different interest and focus, and learn from each other."

Guy Knight, a vice-president of Charles Schwab Europe, a stock-broking company which acts on behalf of between 500 and 1,000 investment clubs, says the clubs are "predominantly about enjoyment and learning".

Club members pay a monthly subscription, typically between £20 and £25, but sometimes as little as £10. Once clubs have decided where they want to invest, a stockbroker is needed to carry out transactions for the club.

Club size is restricted to 20 members, because they operate like partnerships and any more than 20 members would mean that the club would have to be registered as a limited company. Ms Healy adds: "A membership greater than this makes it awkward to make decisions. We try to emphasise the fun side. If you make a mistake, you lose money, but don't worry about it too much. Get back in there and do your research."

Mr Goodson adds: "If you have 20 members, only 1/20th of the money is yours. You can be really, really risky. It's amazing how much more risky you get after a few pints of Speckled Hen!"

Mr Knight believes that working in a group "stops you from making silly decisions... at the end of the day it is a democratic process."

ProShare awards three prizes every year for the most successful club (won this year by Tykes International, Yorkshire who made profits of 101 per cent); for the best club overall regarding the running of the club and how much fun they have; and for the best newcomer.

Among other competitions run by ProShare is the Share of the Month competition, which asks clubs to pick the share that they think is going to be most successful in the coming month. The winners receive a £1,000 prize.

ProShare also provides a starter manual which gives advice on starting up an investment club. ProShare membership (the first year is free when you buy the starter manual) entitles clubs to access to their helpline and magazine, enables them to attend the Investment Club seminars run by ProShare and NatWest stockbrokers and gives them information on computer software to help revalue stocks and shares.

ProShare are now in the first cycle of their renewal programme with 70 per cent of the clubs continuing their membership. Ms Healy says: "It is difficult to know why the other 30 per cent are no longer functioning, but clubs do close down as people leave the area where the club was first established."

The ProShare Investment Club manual is available from ProShare, Library Chambers, 13/14 Basinghall Street, London EC2V 5BQ. Credit card orders: 0171 394 5200. The price is £25, but to The Independent readers it is £17 plus £3 postage and packing.

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INSIDE

Unit Trusts Shopping

4 Motoring
6 Property

8 SHOPPING
9

First, decide to do something

FINANCIAL MAKEOVER

NAME JOYCE ALLEN AGE 54 OCCUPATION ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATOR

JOYCE ALLEN is a departmental administrator at the London School of Economics. Her salary is a touch above the average for London. She is an American citizen and will receive a pension in the US when she retires. If she works for her present employer until she is 65, she will be entitled to an occupational pension based on 11 years service. She has no significant savings and a number of debts including a five-year, fixed-rate mortgage at 6.79 per cent which costs £450 a month and has another 15 years to run.

The Adviser:
Tyrone Silcott is a senior financial planner at City Independent Financial Planning, 35, Paul St. London EC2A 4NQ (0171-628 0857)

The Assessment:
Joyce finds herself in a very difficult situation but hers is typical of many that I see. Her income over the last 10 years has gradually declined, while her expenses over that period have gradually increased. At 54, she faces retirement with the dread of someone suspecting that they have not made sufficient arrangements. A particularly worrying feature is that her mortgage is set to run beyond her retirement age. Although she is prepared to work beyond the age of 65, she might not get that choice.

Her debt is made up of mortgage, personal loan, bank overdraft and credit cards. Almost 80 per cent of her disposable income is going to service her current debts. If you include her mortgage payments, this makes it very difficult to invest and accumulate capital while also maintaining a reasonable standard of living in what is one of the most expensive cities in the world, London.

Unlike many of her generation, she has no substantial inheritance likely so there is no chance of that taking the pressure off. Financially, she is alone.

Experience has shown that there are a number of steps that Miss Allen can take

that will improve her lot. The first is the biggest. She must decide emphatically to change her financial position and that she is willing to make that happen. Second, she needs to go on an information-gathering exercise to discover what her situation will be when she retires. Simply knowing the facts can relieve the pressure.

Before moving to the UK 10 years ago, Ms Allen paid into the American social security system for a period of 30 years. There are procedures for obtaining a forecast of her benefits from those contributions and she should investigate these.

She is a member of her employer's superannuation scheme. It is a good scheme that offers guaranteed benefits as well as a range of sickness and death benefits. Unfortunately, she only joined her current employer in October 1997 and if she contributes to this scheme through to the age of 65, at current levels of income (benefits are paid as a fraction of salary) she is looking at retirement benefits from that scheme of only £2,150 a year indexed and a tax-free lump sum of £9,500.

She has a personal pension into which she no longer contributes. It has value of just £6,500 as contributions were only made for five years. As a member of her employer's scheme, no further contributions can be made.

We can request a quotation from the provider based on standard growth rates, but I would expect that even if funds performed well above standard growth rates, this small amount will not add significantly to her income in retirement. For example, today a £10,000 fund with Norwich Union for a woman at the age of 65 would provide a level annual income without guarantees of only £710.

It is clear that Ms Allen needs to bolster her savings and investments. It is equally clear, looking at her budget, that she cannot afford, in her current situation, to pay more money monthly into topping up her pension via AVCs or ISAs and it doesn't take

an economics professor to work out that in order to do so, either her outgoings have to go down or her income will have to go up.

The most typical way to reduce her outgoings would be to re-finance her debt including her mortgage. However, there are some problems. In May, she took a new mortgage with the Yorkshire at a fixed rate of 6.79 per cent for five years. Rates are likely to fall below this but if she were to re-mortgage again, she would pay penalties of up to 6 per cent of the amount borrowed.

Other options include selling her home to release equity. However, the level of equity would be small, she would still need somewhere to live, and she would probably have to move well out of London to reduce costs.

The light at the end of the tunnel is that one of her personal loans, which is currently costing her £222.70 per month, ends in October 2000. Her goal must be to maintain her current financial position and not to build up any further debt within the next two years. This is paramount. If she has to take extreme measures to achieve this - cut up credit cards, go without a holiday for a year, draw up a strict spending budget - it has to be done. Her income cannot bear a further build-up of debt.

In order to do anything in the shorter term, the other option is that she increases her income. I understand that she is able to do some freelance typing and has 100wpm. She could perhaps look to do some freelance work in order to build up extra income that way. Ms Allen has said she is willing to do extra work in the evenings. I would then suggest any freelance or extra earnings were used immediately to build up a short-term savings fund equal to at least three months' outgoings. This money is not to be spent on anything other than dire emergencies. Holidays do not qualify on this basis.

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THE GOVERNMENT'S new pension plans, published this week, will inevitably complicate the pension scene, which is crying out for simplification.

Existing entitlements will remain, and it will take at least half a century before the transition from the current system to the new one is complete.

But if we accept that SERPS, the existing second state pension, is unsustainably expensive, and a substantial number of people will never trust the existing personal pensions system because of the persistent bad publicity over high charges and the way in which they were mis-sold, then reform was unavoidable.

But is this the best way forward? The Government plans to introduce a new second state pension (SSP) to replace the state earnings-related pension (SERPS) for anyone earning less than £9,000 a year in today's money.

It will be extended to carers and will rapidly introduce a minimum income guarantee (MIG), which will be indexed to national earnings, to preserve its value and reduce the number of state pensioners dependent on income support to top up their pensions. It will cost the taxpayer more, but it will tackle a serious social problem. So far, so good.

The proposals will not directly affect occupational schemes provided by employers. But the Green Paper introduces a new privately-funded low-cost stakeholder pension, aimed primarily at everyone earning between £9,000 and £18,500 a year in current money who

CLIFFORD GERMAN

The Government's new pension plans will inevitably complicate the pension scene

does not currently have a pension. It will however compete with existing personal pension schemes.

Crucially the Government has rejected the idea, favoured by Frank Field of introducing a compulsory pension plan which would provide a private pension for everyone who does not have a company pension scheme or a personal pension.

To argue that the poorly paid, the disabled and the carers could not afford a mandatory pension misses the point. The taxpayer would have to make their contributions just as the taxpayer will have to pay for the proposed second state pension which will replace SERPS.

Instead, the Government has decided to rely on a combination of further tax incentives and national insurance rebates, to tempt those people who currently have no private pension entitlements either to join their employer's scheme if one is on offer, or to take out a stakeholder pension which will be simple to understand, and have low management charges.

The incentives will be supported by a persistent publicity campaign to try and frighten non-joiners - who have so far resisted

the pressure to take out a personal pension - into taking out a stakeholder pension instead.

Employers will be expected to encourage all their employees either to join the company scheme or take out a stakeholder pension and shoulder extra administration costs (such as deducting contributions from the payroll), but they will still not be obliged to contribute either to personal pensions or the new stakeholder pensions.

The continued absence of an employer contribution must increase the real risk that many people who could contribute to a pension plan will still decide not to do so, and will rely on the state to take care of them when they are old.

Ironically, there is also a real risk that new stakeholder pensions could compete so effectively with existing personal pensions that established providers - and the army of salesmen and financial advisers who help to sell personal pensions - will find themselves forced to reform or quit the business.

There will also certainly be some hidden snags, especially for people whose fortunes change, for better or worse, in mid-career. For the long-term unemployed, and for those who would like to switch from personal pensions to stakeholder pensions, but have already paid heavy up-front charges.

Delays to starting the stakeholder pensions for another four years also give too many people a perfect excuse to delay a decision.

LOOSE CHANGE

SG ASSET Management is offering a 2 per cent discount on lump sum investments into its three PEPs - a UK growth fund and a European growth fund. The company also has a non-qualifying technology fund, restricting PEP-linked investments into it to £1,500. Call 0181-815 8647.

INDEPENDENT MORTGAGE Collection is launching a mortgage which combines a nine-year, 2.75 per cent discount on

the existing variable rate, currently 8.2 per cent, with a 3 per cent cashback, up to a maximum of £20,000. After year one, the loan offers a free switch into another fixed rate until the end of the penalty period in year six. Call 0800 7310137.

BRISTOL & WEST is launching a five-year Children's Savings Bond, with a variable interest rate, guaranteed to be within 1 per cent of UK bank base rates. Call 0117-9437188.

THE NATIONAL Canine Defence League is teaming up with Petplan to offer insurance to dog owners. The policy cuts the cost of cover for owners who have their dogs neutered. The cost of cover in London, for a neutered pedigree is £10.90. Call 0800 0726677.

AGE CONCERN Funeral Plan has a new booklet, *A Practical Guide to Coping with Bereavement*. It includes advice on helping children deal with the issue. Call 0800387718.

Enticing incentives

A new report into the housing and mortgage market sees some good times, and some very good deals, ahead for hard-pressed borrowers. By Jonathan Davis

Like most people who should know better, I spend far too much of my time thinking about house prices, mortgages and the outlook for the housing market. My New Year resolution is to treat all news about trends in house prices and mortgages as an interesting curiosity which should mainly be ignored, though once in a blue moon may be worth doing something about.

This is sound advice, but not so easy to put into practice. Which is why, before taking my vow of abstinence on the subject, I cannot resist commenting on a new piece of research about the medium term outlook for house prices and the mortgage market from Lombard Street Research. Professor Tim Congdon's economics consultancy. The report, by Stewart Robertson, is one of the best and most closely argued analyses of the mortgage market that I have seen in ages.

Mr Robertson's analysis effectively makes the case that the buyers' market of the last two to three years - the period of cashbacks, flexible mortgages and all the other new incentives dangled before the would be mortgage borrower - is likely to endure for some while yet. His argument goes as follows.

On the borrowers' side (that's you and me), the demand for mortgages is likely to remain subdued for several years. The main reason is that as a nation we are still far more in debt to mortgage lenders than we wish (and perhaps ought) to be. The profound effects of the house price crash in the first half of the 1990s, which plunged thousands into negative equity, and overextended many others, have yet to play themselves out.

It is true that, thanks to the welcome revival in the housing market since 1995, negative equity is now largely now a thing of the past. But it remains the case that mortgage borrowing is still at unprecedentedly high levels, almost any way you care to measure it. As the chart shows, the ratio of mortgage debt to housing equity (that is, the proportion of the value of our houses which is financed by mortgages) is still around 50 per cent, well above the long-run historical average of 30 per cent.

Meanwhile, two other powerful forces are working to restrain mortgage demand. One is the cumulative effect of the phasing out by successive governments of MIRAS tax relief. The demise of MIRAS has substantially reduced the tax advantages of borrowing to buy property, but it has taken time for homeowners to wake up to quite what a difference the ending of Miras has made to the cost of buying property, particularly for higher rate taxpayers.

The other factor is the potential impact on housing demand of the changing pattern in population growth. The number of first time buyers in the housing market is now starting to decline. First time buyers are the marginal buyers who set the pattern for housing market demand, and they are a diminishing band. This too can only put further downward pressure on future demand for mortgages.

While the demand for mortgages is therefore likely to remain subdued for several years, it is doing so at a time when banks and building societies have also built up record amounts of capital which they now need to deploy profitably. A significant chunk of this capital has been devoted to winning a share of the mortgage market over the last 15 years, and there is as yet no sign of the drive for new business abating - if anything, rather the opposite.

Mr Robertson argues, convincingly to my mind, that the combination of weak mortgage demand and a surplus of capital in the banking sector can have



As a nation, we are still far more in debt to mortgage lenders than we would wish Tony Buckingham

only one consequence. If his analysis is even half way correct, what it suggests is that the battle for mortgage seeker's business is going to remain intense.

He sees a continuation of today's market in which mortgage seekers - especially first-time or new borrowers - continue to find themselves knocking at a virtually open door.

Most of the benefits of the struggle for market share in mortgages so far have gone to first time buyers, but Mr

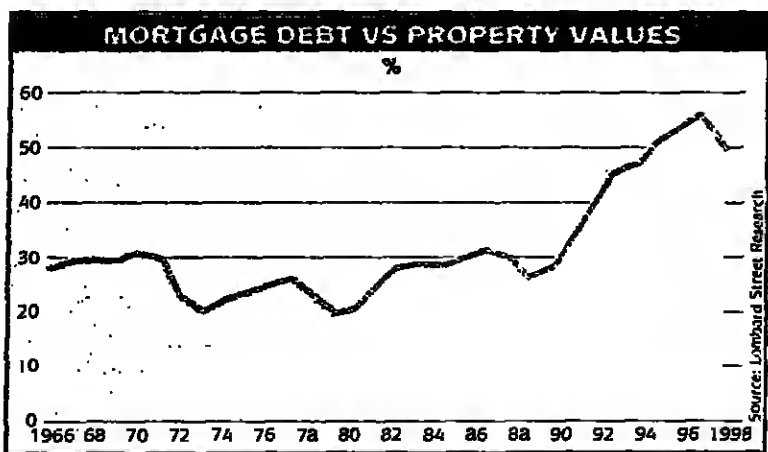
Robertson predicts that we will also see much more remortgaging activity by existing borrowers as more and more people come to realise the benefit of switching their mortgages, and the extent of cross-subsidy from existing to new borrowers becomes widely known.

Mr Robertson thinks that those best placed to benefit from these market conditions will be the surviving mutual building societies. His analysis shows that, since 1996, mutual societies have

been taking a growing share of new mortgage business from the banks. The mutual societies have both the greatest incentive and the greatest opportunity to go on doing so, should a price war develop.

In Lombard Street Research's view (as in mine), barring a bad recession there are solid reasons to expect a period of house price increases over the next few years. However, as most people still feel they have more mortgage debt than they would like, or are used to, the emphasis for most people will be on repaying or refinancing mortgages, rather than raising their overall mortgage borrowing. This will be a tough environment for lenders, but will present an opportunity for borrowers to get some outstanding deals on their mortgage. Your New Year Resolution, therefore, should be to make sure you are ready to cash in on these favourable conditions as long as they last.

'Strategic Analysis of the UK Mortgage Market', by Stewart Robertson, is published by FT Business. Jonathan Davis can be contacted via e-mail at: davisbiz@aol.com



Lloyds goes online

LLOYDS BANK launched its Internet banking service, Lloyds On-Line, just over a month ago at the beginning of November.

You may register for the service online but it will take around 10 working days for your registration to be activated. Obviously, it is limited to Lloyds' customers. However, the bank has already signed up around 27,000 users.

Lloyds On-Line sets out new territory in web-based banking. There is no software to download, although it claims compatibility with both Microsoft Money and Intuit's Quicken financial software packages. It is also the first UK online banking service to be Apple Mac-compatible.

The service is guaranteed to be free for the first 12 months, until November 1999, but the bank reserves the right to make a small charge thereafter. At present, your only costs in using Lloyds On-Line will be phone bills and ISP charges.

So what can you do with the Lloyds service? Pay bills; transfer money between accounts; look at



INTERNET INVESTOR

ROBIN AMLÖT

current and previous statements; and check and change the dates and amounts of standing orders. You may also view direct debits, but you may not alter them. The reason you may not be able to do other things that you might wish to do is security.

Payments may only be made to what the site calls "pre-arranged beneficiaries". So if you want to pay a bill from somebody you have not dealt with before, or set up a new standing order, you have to ring Lloyds' telephone banking service.

Once you have set up such a "pre-arranged beneficiary", their details will remain accessible to allow future bill payments to be made.

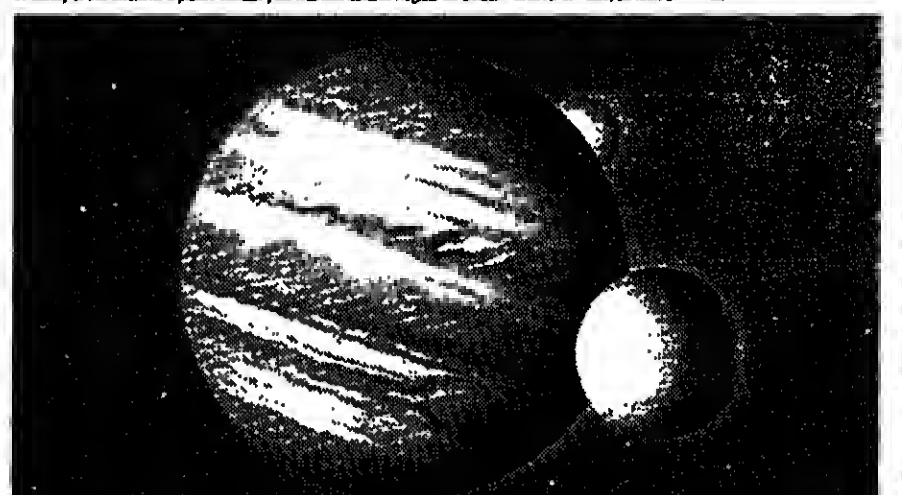
One little niggle brought to my attention by a reader is that it appears to be impossible to pre-arrange a transfer between accounts, which may only be done on the day in question.

You will need to be using either Internet Explorer 4.0 or Netscape Communicator/Navigator 4.0 to access the service. Lloyds also recommends that you have a virus checker programme.

It may not be too long before the PC is turned completely into a commodity by becoming a give-away special offer on its own. In a recent interview, Ben Halla, chief executive of microchip maker National Semiconductor, envisaged a point in the future when banks will offer customers a free PC when opening a new account.

Lloyds On-Line: www.lloydsbank.co.uk
Robin can be reached at RobinAmlot@aol.com

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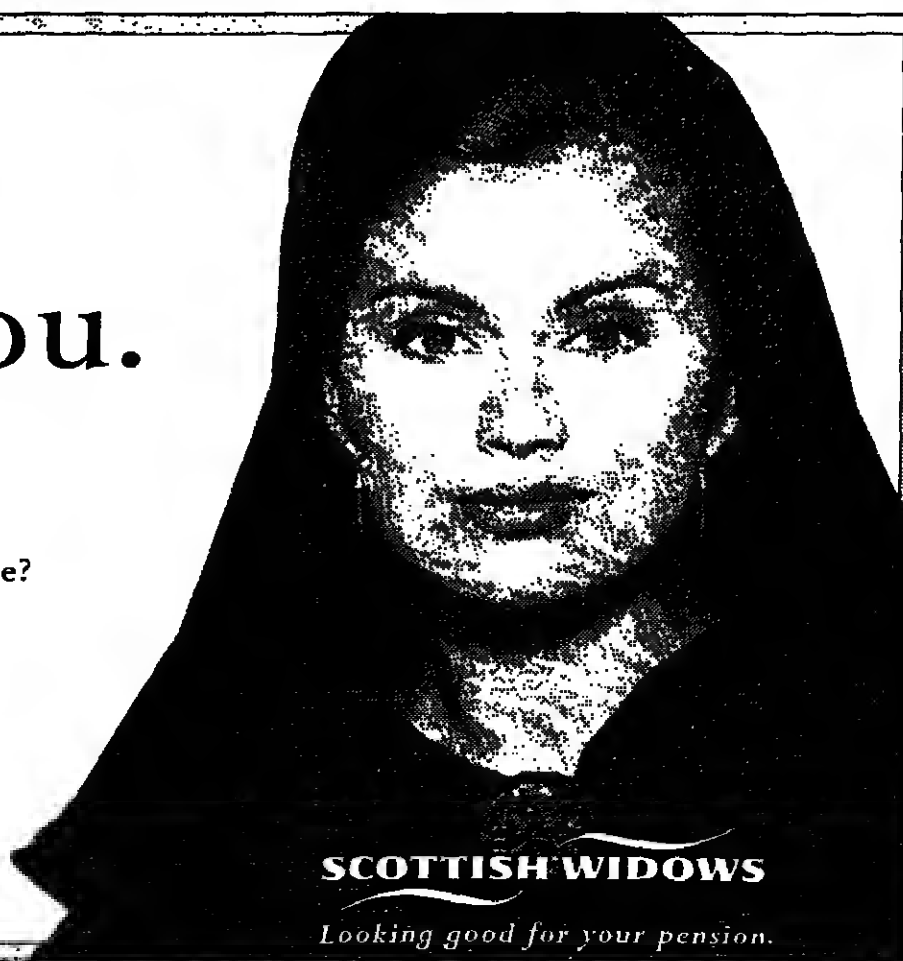
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THIS HAS been a difficult year - not only because it was hard to predict, but because of the trials and tribulations that have beset world economies and stock markets in general. It started on a high, with many analysts forecasting that a peak would be reached - and soon. The continuation of the bull market into the early summer caught many by surprise. Valuation levels became sorely stretched. Weight of money was more often than not, cited as the reason for the continuing surge in equity prices. Lower interest rates and inflation seemed to contribute, although the fall in the cost of living in the developed world looked likely to reduce investment returns.

In the end it was the Russian crisis that turned the market on its head. We are having to live with violent market moves these days, and the summer was no exception. The rush to quality created anomalies that appeared bizarre in some instances.

Yield spreads widened to unprecedented levels and, among other things, contributed to the demise of one of the most respected hedge-fund operators in the business - LTCM. The dollar and sovereign debt of the world's most powerful economies benefited, but collateral damage was evident in the way that Brazil and other emerging markets took a pasting.

In the end it was either the shortest bear market on record or a market aberration. By the autumn, prices were marching up again and America even broke into new high ground. But the volatility remained and the disparity between the performance of various sectors served to unsettle some managers.

We approach the end of the year with our own economy slowing, little sign of Christmas cheer on the high street, no resolution to the problems in Russia and Brazil, and bombers and cruise



BRIAN TORA

It was the shortest bear market on record - or a market aberration

missiles once again in the air in the Middle East. It hardly paints a picture of future stability and optimism, but it seems unlikely, however, that equity values are once again poised on the edge of a precipice.

Yet eight years ago, when the coalition forces responded to the invasion of Kuwait, markets took the whole thing in their stride. And it had not been so very long since the stock market crashed, following which intertemporal priming of the world's economies had led to the slump of the early Nineties.

Today is different, with the American economy seemingly unstoppable, even if the President of the world's most powerful nation may be approaching his sell-by date. Deflation may be a worry, but by and large prospects really do not look too bad. Investors learned a lot in 1998. Putting that experience to good use in the year to come will be the trick that many of us will seek to turn in the months ahead.

Forecasts are generally foolhardy, but perhaps we should all now be polishing our crystal balls and endeavouring to second-guess next year's market trends. It might keep me out of mischief as I face the turkey curry next week.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton Investment Strategy Committee

BEST MORTGAGES

MORTGAGES	Telephone number	% Rate and period	Max LTV %	Fee	Incentive	Redemption Penalty
FIXED RATES Without redemption to-in						
Radnor BS	0800 302010	5.95% for 2 years	90%	-	Richard at valuation fee, no MIP	101.2 yrs 4.3 months interest
Lambeth Simply Postal	0845 999192	5.95% for 2 years	95%	£295	£100 Holiday Voucher	To 1.2.02 5% of advance
Scotney BS	0800 133149	5.75% for 5 years	95%	£295	-	To 5 yrs 6 months interest
FIXED RATES With redemption to-in						
Northern Rock	0845 050500	3.85% to 1.3.01	95%	£295	6 months free ASU, 100% to 85% no MIP	101.8 yrs 5.5 months interest
Scotney BS	0800 133149	5.25% for 3 years	95%	£295	£200 cash rebate	101.5 yrs 5% of sum repaid
First Mortgage	0800 094088	5.45% to 31.1.04	90%	£370	-	To 31.1.04 5% of advance
CAPPED RATES						
Barclay & Wells	0800 118955	5.65% to 1.2.02	95%	£295	For advances up to 85% no MIP	To 31.1.04 5% of sum repaid
Scotney BS	0800 133149	5.95% for 4 years	95%	£295	100 MIP free travel insurance	101.4 yrs 5% of sum repaid
First Mortgage	0800 094088	6.25% to 30.11.03	90%	£370	-	To 31.11.03 5% of advance
FIRST TIME BUYERS (Variable unless stated)						
Country BS	0845 656632	4.20% to 31.3.01	95%	£295	For advances up to 90% no MIP	To 31.3.01 10.15 months interest
Scotney BS	0800 133149	4.95% for 3 years	95%	£295	£200 cash rebate	101.5 yrs 5% of sum repaid
Northern Rock	0800 302010	5.70% for 5 years	95%	£295	Refund on valuation fee, no MIP	To 5 yrs 5% of sum repaid
VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES						
Northern Rock	0845 050500	3.85% to 1.3.01	95%	-	Refund value fee & no MIP	To 1.1.04 6 months interest
Almance & Leicester	0845 203 3000	5.20% to 1.1.02	95%	£295	No MIP, free val & £250 for legal fees	To 1.1.04 6 months interest
Dunelm BS	01332 841000	6.15% for 5 years	95%	£295	No MIP, free val & £250 for legal fees	To 1.1.04 6 months interest

BEST BORROWING RATES

PERSONAL LOANS	Telephone	APR %	Fixed monthly payments on £2K over 5 yrs
UNSECURED			
Northern Rock	0845 421421	9.9% M	£163.14
PhoneLine/Visa	0800 1336586	12.9%	£163.02
Direct Line	0181 680 9966	12.9%	£163.75
OVERDRAFTS			
Almance & Leicester	0800 999955	10.95%	12.80% 2.30%
Northern BS	0800 302010	10.95%	12.20% 2.10%
Almance & Leicester	0800 731774	10.95%	12.20% 2.30%
CREDIT CARDS			
People's Bank	0800 551055	Mastercard/Visa 0.56% M	6.90% M
Capital One Bank	0800 952522	Visa 0.56% M	6.90% M
RBS Alliance	0800 077770	Visa 0.57% M	6.90% M
GOLD CARDS			
Co-operative Bank	0845 123272	Best Rate Visa 0.52% M	10.87% £120
People's Bank	0800 551055	Mastercard/Visa 0.56% M	6.90% M
Capital One Bank	0800 952522	Visa 0.56% M	6.90% M
STORE CARDS			
John Lewis	01244 681681	1.97%	1.97%
Next	01244 681681	1.97%	1.97%
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A - Minimum age 21 yrs. Holders of comprehensive motor insurance policy or holder's existing customers
APR - Annualised percentage rate
ASU - Accident, sickness and unemployment insurance
B+C - Buildings and contents insurance
H - Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged
LTV - Loan to value
MIP - Mortgage indemnity premium
N - Introductory rate for a limited period
U - Unemployment insurance
W - Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System
F - Fixed rate (all other rates variable)
M - Net rate
P - By post only

All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice.
Source: MONEYFACTS 01603 476476

* If completion to before 30.4.99
All rates subject to change without notice.
Source: MONEYFACTS 01603 476476

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BEST SAVINGS RATES

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RBS Alliance	0800 077770	Visa 0.57% M	6.90% M
GOLD CARDS			
Co-operative Bank	0845 123272	Best Rate Visa 0.52% M	10.87% £120
People's Bank	0800 551055	Mastercard/Visa 0.56% M	6.90% M
Capital One Bank	0800 952522	Visa 0.56% M	6.90% M
STORE CARDS			
John Lewis	01244 681681	1.97%	1.97%
Next	01244 681681	1.97%	1.97%
Marks & Spencer	01244 681681	1.97%	1.97%

FIXED RATE BONDS						
Direct	0800 242424	Fixed Interest Savings	6 Month	£5,000	6.125% F	Monthly
PhoneLine & Leicester	0800 112214	Fixed Rate Bond	1 Year	£1,000	6.90% F	Monthly
First Bank	0800 373181	Fixed Rates	2 Year	£2,500	6.40% F	1/2 Yearly
First Bank	0800 373181	Fixed Rates	3 Year	£2,500	6.40% F	1/2 Yearly
FIRST TESSAS						
First Hedge Bank	01223 220800		5 Year	£20	8.00%	Year
First Economy BS	0800 838811		5 Year	£1,000	8.00%	Year

Looking for an item with classic appeal, but that is modern at the same time? You need the New Traditionalists – steeped in Britishness, and available via the Internet. By Karen Falconer

Going back to British basics

Take a look at recent headlines and things are looking pretty gloomy on the British high street. But, when the large retailers catch a Christmas chill, the shopping world is not necessarily collapsing with flu. For, as one big name after another suffers a decline in profitability, away from the bustle of the City, a new breed of retailers is doing rather nicely. Meet the New Traditionalists, the perfect counterpoint to the beach and steel brigade, which celebrate – and trade on – Britishness without either the funkiness of Cool Britannia or the stuffiness of Jermyn Street – more Ledbury market town than Metrocentre mall, more Martha Stewart than Marks & Spencer. What unites this disparate gang is an emphasis on personal taste and quality and a studied distaste for the indiscriminate mass market.

Where Laura Ashley and Yodel got themselves labelled as gift places for grannies by affluent baby-boomers, the new names on the block may be selling tradition, but it is carefully selected for modern taste.

Take Crabtree & Evelyn, a company that has survived several decades and is renowned for classics such as its joboba soap and pine bath essence. "We've stepped up several gears in the last couple of years and are now bringing out products that will make people sit up," explains Catie Briscoe. "Our watchwords are innovation, relevance and lifestyle, and our image is that of a sanctuary. If we weren't so innovative, we'd be suffering more, because consumers are far more knowledgeable than they used to be, and know what they want."

The recent Crabtree & Evelyn Aromathology collection, all sourced from small producers that use organic or wild-gathered plants, includes a Headache Aide that is perfect for the stressed-out Nineties person who struggles between work and status sessions. Last year, the company also launched Gardeners, a range of skincare products specifically devised to address the boom in gardening. And already Gardeners Hand Therapy (£8.95) has knocked joboba soap from its pedestal of 25 years as a best-seller.

Savouring the success of innovation, the company is launching a new Cooles range next March. "It's about taking a very simple

idea and making it different," adds Briscoe. "There's a clear trend towards kitchenware and cooking. But cooking has changed: it's no longer about a woman putting a meal on the table three times a day. It's therapeutic, a hobby."

Hence the special soap for dishwasher hands (£6.95); aromas to create the smell of home cooking around ready-made meals (£2.95); and, for the millennium neurotic, a fruit and vegetable wash to remove surface pesticides (£2.50), passed by the US food regulatory body, the FDA.

Crabtree & Evelyn grew on the high street to its current 700 outlets but, in contrast, the neat House mail-order catalogue started life within a British art gallery, the Hambleton Gallery, now evolved into a 3,000sqft "destination shop".

"It's hard to make an art gallery financially viable in Dorset, so two-and-a-half years ago we set up the mail-order operation. We've had a fantastic year, touch lots of wood," says Victoria Suffield, House's director. "We called it House because all the photographs are shot in the house – a scruffy lived-in one, with mucky basins and rusty taps."

Fresh farm produce is pictured jostling in large wire baskets (£31); plain white china dinner plates (£10.95) are personalised with curious place-cards and menu-holders (£9.95 for four); and the best-selling Moroccan tea glasses (£14.95 for six) are filled with daisy flowers. There's also a selection of sisal baskets to store logs (from £3.95), lights, vases, sheets, toys... "It's all about personal selection, but I don't want to be too dictatorial. They're quite simple items, and you don't have to buy into the whole House thing. I want people to buy beautiful pieces from us, then put them with their own things," says Victoria Suffield.

Duntisbourne is based around similar values, but steps further into British traditionalism. Based in Cheshire, and started in October this year by two people who previously supplied scarves to high-street retailers, it has a quintessential Britishness represented by an ideal – a farm in the Cotswolds that is pictured, to set the scene, at the beginning of the small but beautifully produced catalogue. Duntisbourne has also launched a gallery on the Internet, which aims to sell one-off pieces to an international market.

"Duntisbourne products are all hand-made in Britain. We want to



Best of British: hand painted salmon bowl, £84.95 from the Duntisbourne catalogue, top; House's best-selling Moroccan tea glasses, £14.95 for six, above right; Crabtree & Evelyn's new Cooles range, which includes the spice soaps shown above left, is due out in March and starts at £2.95 for innovative cooking aroma sprays

offer future heirlooms," says its co-founder, Venetia Hendry. "We're not trying to be two country: everything we select will fit in the modern home – but it won't be chrome. Its thinking is opposite to that of the high street, which is awash with cheap imports at low prices." Pieces include antique oak mirrors (£74.95), hand-forged steel-pipe fire-blenders (£18.95), sycamore hand-turned bowls (£69.95), and cobalt-blue glass bowls (£149.95). Best-sellers so far are the wrought-iron candle

sticks (£43 for two including candles), hand-painted farmyard china (from £34.95), and a hand-painted salmon bowl (£84.95).

A similar venture, set up just over a year ago, is Country Living magazine's By Post. Developed from the Country Living fair, this was initially set up to sell seasonal Christmas gifts, but this year it has expanded into selling lifestyle items, and is toying with the idea of becoming biannual rather than just seasonal (at the moment it runs only from October

to February).

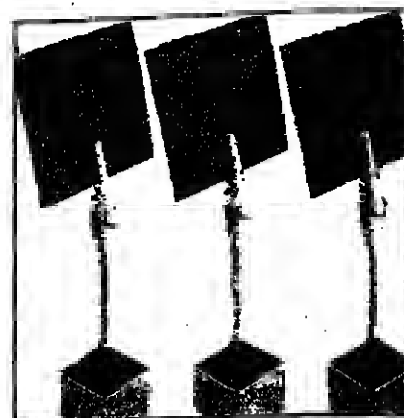
As with the other New Traditionalists, By Post prides itself on selling goods that are in some way exclusive. "Our customers don't mind spending money as long as what they are buying is different," says Helen Riley, product developer for the company. Best-sellers include the pashmina shawl (£124.95) which arrives in an elegant silk envelope; leather washbags (£19.95) and various Christmas decorations (from £12.95).

However, while consumers are not flashing their money about, perhaps, as maintained in a report for American Express last week, this is as much to do with increasing canniness as with a lack of confidence in the economy.

For more information contact Crabtree & Evelyn on 0171-603 1611, or www.crabtree-evelyn.com; House on 01258 830208; Duntisbourne on 0161-980 5880 or www.duntisbourne.com; By Post on 01536 720144

SIX OF THE BEST

PLACECARD HOLDERS



Mini clipholder for placecards, £5 for six, Paperchase (0171 580 8496)



Silver-plated elephant placecard holders, £69.50 for six, The General Trading Company (0171 730 0411)



Place card and menu holders, £9.95 for four, House (01258 454884 for mail order)



Silver-plated pig place card holders, £15.99 for three, The National Trust (0117 988 4747)

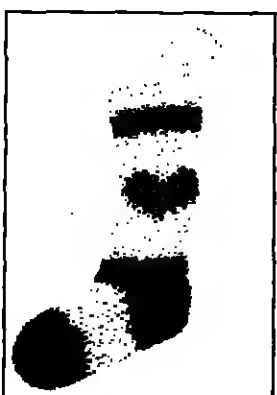


Alessi pearwood photo, postcard, placecard and menu holder, £9.95, Ocean (0800 8494840)



Set of six miniature handbag placecard holders, £12.50, Graham & Green (0171 727 4594)

STOCKING FILLER STOCKING



FOR THE last stocking filler of the week, make sure your Christmas buys have somewhere nice to await their unwrapping. This hand-finished woolen stocking comes from Shaker and will make even a squiddy satsuma seem a sophisticated gift. Available in small, £27.95, or large, £44.95, on 0171-935 9461.

SHOPTALK



HIP COVENT Garden clothes shop, Koh Samui, is well known for its sophisticated and colour-coded clothes rails and for the troupe of fashion folk and celebrities that march through its doors. From £49 for a Christa Davis vest to £1,200 for a Ruti Danan dress, it's not difficult to see what attracts shoppers such as Kylie Minogue, Kate Moss and Björk to the coathangers supporting garments by fashionable young designers such as Lainey Keogh, Tristan Webber, YMC and Dries Van Noten.

Four years ago, Paul Sexton and Talita Zoe gave up their jobs to open Koh Samui in order to sell the sort of clothes that they themselves like. The idea was that it would serve as a showcase for young British fashion designers and, besides the friendly service, customers can enjoy the opportunity to pick up a little something by a soon-to-be-noticed designer – although

these days it is equally likely to be someone from the international scene.

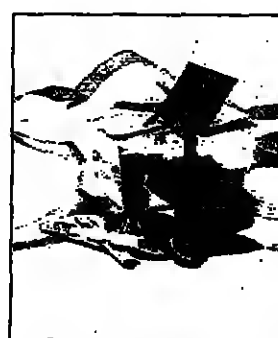
The pair are credited with having just about the best eye that there is for spotting the Next Big Thing; in fact, these champions of British design are doing so well that the owners of the exotically

named store opened a second shop in Knightsbridge earlier this month.

The new Koh Samui shop is at 28 Loundes Street, London SW1 (0171-338 8292); the original is at 65 Monmouth Street, London, WC2 (0171-240 4280)

OUT WITH THE OLD

WHEN YOU'VE got to Christmas Eve without so much as ripping the end off the Sellotape, let alone unzipping your wallet, it's time to reach for the chocolate. Get it right with James's handmade French chocolates, £5.95 a box from Mortimer & Bennett, 33 Turnham Green Terrace, London W4 (0181-995 4145) ...



IN WITH THE NEW

... or you could simply forget all about the chocolates and get a sweet tooth. Treat your friends' chompers with respect: give them fillings of a purely floral kind by buying them a funky ceramic "molar" vase. The Michael Sodeau design pictured here costs £55 from Same (0171-247 9992).



سكنا من الراجل

I WANT TO OWN... SOME URBAN HARDWARE

The toys are back in town

LIFE'S TOUGH on those mean city streets - but, come on, not that tough. Probably the most distressing urban experience you can put your armoured off-road vehicle through is the local 50p car wash. If this is the kind of pampered street life you lead, then here is your essential urban toolkit. From transport to communications, the well-equipped urbanite has all options covered and, more importantly, meticulously abides by the Golden Rules of Gadgets and Urban Gear.

RULE NUMBER ONE:

Being able to cope with every eventuality, however ludicrous, is the name of the game. Over-qualification is one important maxim.

Tool for the rule: the Casio Pro Trek PRT 40E. In the world of sophisticated egg-timers, this is the one that will tell you what psychological problems the chicken had. The bulges at the side of the watch house a range of sensors that can help you get your various bearings. A digital compass tells you exactly where you're heading in life, the on-board barometer chips in with a few handy hints about the weather, and the altimeter can tell you how high you are (great for clubbers). If you program in how high you want to be, the alarm will automatically sound when you reach that altitude (5th floor Harvey Nicks, whatever). If it's dark and cold up there, just flick your wrist and the auto-illuminator will help you read the temperature gauge. Research will also reveal the dull stuff such as times, alarms and stopwatches, but by then you won't even care.
Cost: £189.95

RULE NUMBER TWO:

Gadget density. The correct size-to-weight ratio is vital if you're going to convince anyone of the seriousness of your tool.

Tool for the rule: the oddly named Leatherman Wave (not to be mistaken for a friendly S&M enthusiast) fits the bill here. This little brick of stainless steel opens its arms to become a shed-load of screwdrivers, pliers, blades and openers, plus a saw, wire-stripper and a diamond-coated file. Whether you want it for filing your nails while waiting for a bus, or deciding to build your own vehicle to get you home in time for tea, this is a crucial bulge for your back pocket.
Cost: £69.95

RULE NUMBER THREE:

In the field of communications, the weight rule is turned on its head. The ideal here is to be able to carry an office in your pocket without even knowing it's there.

Tool for the rule: the Nokia 9110 Communicator (due out in January) weighs 253 grams and allows you to phone in sick, fax in sick, e-mail in sick - even send the pictorial evidence - all from the comfort of your sun-dappled deckchair. As well as the host of Windows-compatible personal organiser facilities, the Communicator can receive pictures via infrared from digital cameras and also has Multi Media Card removable data-storage. Its capacities as an office are sadly lacking, however, when it comes to wild Christmas parties.
Cost: £350-£450

RULE NUMBER FOUR:

Excessive durability and protection, especially where carrying all the clobber is concerned. Gadgets have a Pavlovian reaction to the word "professional" as an emblem on any product, suggesting as it does the toughness and speci-

cation demanded by those whose lives depend on them.

Tool for the rule: to make sure you won't be knocked off course by any stray thermonuclear explosions, sniper attacks, pollution or freak weather conditions as you pop out to take the cat for its evening stroll, invest in a Vexed Generation ballistic nylon Parka.

This is a garment with "specifications" that would put the average

tank to shame: it's made from high tenacity nylon 66 (fashionable with the Ministry of Defence for flak jackets and blast-proofing) and comes internally coated with ooprene for water and fire resistance; has strategic padding around the pelvis, kidneys, spinal column and head; plus a full-face hood for protection and anonymity, and a special sleeve pocket for respiratory mask. Paranoia is definitely back in style

- and if you have trouble getting a taxi to stop for you on the way back from your local war zone, just chuck yourself on to the bonnet with non-chalant impunity.
Cost: £210

RULE NUMBER FIVE:

If it's fast we like it - and that, of course, means transport.

Tool for the rule: if throwing yourself on the bonnet fails, it's time to

whip out your shiny City Bug fold-away electronic scooter. At a racy maximum speed of 15mph you run the risk of being overtaken by the average crisp packet in a breeze, but it is rechargeable and its 1,200-watt motor has a 12-mile range. The downside to this nifty machine is that, although the frame weighs next to nothing, the battery would need some serious weight-watching to make it anything like portable -

and that, unless the idea of a whale pedalling along on the bicycle of a small child appeals, or you are the kind of person whose main concern is whether the helmet you are advised to wear will cause distress to your locks, it is guaranteed to make you feel silly. It's tough on the streets - but you've got to keep a sense of humour.
Cost: £550

PASCAL WYSE

The Casio Pro Trek PRT 40E is available from Time For Life on 0171-497 0534; for Leatherman stockists, or product information, call the importers, Whithy Products, on 01539 721032; for your nearest Nokia stockist call 0990 003110; Vexed Generation clothing is available from 0171-237 6224; and for stockists of the City Bug fold-away electronic scooter, call 01276 679558



Tools of the urban trade (clockwise from top left): City Bug fold-away electronic scooter, £550; Leatherman Wave, £89.95; Casio Pro Trek PRT 40E, £189.95; and the Nokia 9110 Communicator, due in January for £350-£450

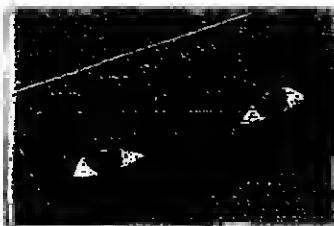
CHECK IT OUT

CHRISTMAS SURVIVAL BUYS

UNFORTUNATELY, IT is rarely just geese that get fat and fed up over the festive season. Truth is, a week of wild nights, serious gorging and a few too many glasses of festive cheer contribute to hangover hell for all but the most clued-up of party kittens. The good news is that you can minimise the damage without sacrificing the seasonal pleasures with *The Independent's* tips for surviving Christmas.

The first festive rule is to be discerning when sleeping around. If you're playing away from home, remember to take a Roly Poly™ bed with you to ensure a proper night's sleep. Named because of its Swiss-roll shape, the single cotton futon is lightweight, compact and a reasonable £24.95 - and it zips up into an easily carried shape with handles. New this month, it's available in navy, green, terracotta or petrol blue from The Futon Company (0171-978 4498 for stockists).

Dress to impress and keep cosy too with red, magenta and one pyjamas, £90 by Abraham & Thakore (from the Conran Shop, 0171-589 7401) and be sure to insist on a new Comfortel pillow. Made by DuPont, they cost from



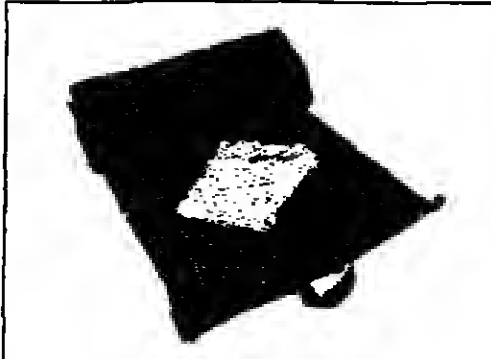
£15 and are available at Marks & Spencer and major department stores. The cluster-fibre filling is designed to support your head throughout the night. Another important point is to keep up appearances, however rough you feel. If you've overdone it the night before, get yourself back in the mood with Carlad Aromatherapy party blend, £5.95 for 100ml (01932 269921 for stockists). With clary sage, bergamot, orange, peppermint and ylang-ylang, this is the perfect quick fix to wake you up and leave your skin feeling peachy. Hide any morning-after horrors with Estée Lauder's Minute Makeup, a quick-to-apply cream foundation stick that costs £21 (0800 525501 for stockists), and supportive but sexy underwear from BodySlimmers Nancy Ganz (0115 9795796). The 15 pieces range from Hi-Cut

briefs (£16) to the Hourglass Body Dress (£26).

Finally, fortify the soul with a glass or two of Rosemount Estate's fruity 1997 Shiraz (£6.99 from major supermarkets and off-licences) and put on some cheery Christmas tunes. The Cool Yule CD from Hallmark costs a jazzy £2.99 (0181-207 6207 for stockists).

And, you should always make sure you have a little something up your sleeve for times of emergency. Shirt-wearers shouldn't leave home without some Aspirin Cufflinks, £32.95 from Saville-Edells (0171-351 1221) - if you feel a headache coming on, relief is close to hand.

If it all goes horribly wrong, invest in an urban-survival hangover kit, £9.95 from Farmacia (0171-631 0830). This includes high-strength vitamin C tablets, hopscoth bitters to soothe the liver, and a pot of healing lip balm. Or recover jolting in the bath with Whittard's Eye Bag Tea, £2.50 (0800 535092 for nearest store): filled with flowers and camomile for tired, over-partied eyes. Then jump into your new pyjamas, unfurl your new futon, and dream about the next party.



Seasonal savers (clockwise from top right): aspirin cufflinks, £32.95 from Saville-Edells; Roly Poly™, £24.95 from The Futon Company; and Abraham & Thakore pyjamas, £90 from a selection at the Conran Shop; Eye Bag Tea, £2.50 from Whittard

IF I WIN THE LOTTERY TONIGHT...

LEONARD SLATKIN, CONDUCTOR

THE FIRST thing I'd do if I suddenly won the lottery would be to put an amount of money away for my four-and-a-half-year-old son's education. Then I would try to secure a way of funding more arts education in all public schools in the United States, because I think it's one of the great weaknesses in the system over there at the moment.

Young people in the public sector do not receive as much education in music, painting and drama as they used to, because we have cut the funding for them in favour of science and mathematics. This is despite the fact that exposure to the arts at a young age improves their scores in other subjects. The program would start as soon as children started school and part of the money would have to go towards training people to teach properly.



In a similar vein, we need to make sure the US has more exposure to the higher forms of culture. Unlike countries such as the UK, France and Germany, the States does not have that many options for exposure to great drama and music on radio or television. For some reason, it's just not the way we operate, even though we used to have it all the time. I'd also buy myself a plane. If I bought a little jet I wouldn't be subject to the ridiculous timetables of the

airlines which never fly when I need them to. I hate flying. In fact, I'm petrified of flying. I don't like getting on airplanes at all but if I'm going to do it, I might as well be in my own plane.

I certainly wouldn't quit what I'm doing now. So few people get the chance to do what I do. But perhaps I could be a little more exclusive in what I chose to do, as I wouldn't have to think about how much money I was earning.

Leonard Slatkin is principal guest conductor with the Philharmonia Orchestra and launches Part 1 of "Czech Connections" at the Bedford Corn Exchange, tonight (01234 269 519). "Discovering Music With Leonard Slatkin" is on BBC Radio 3 at 6pm daily from Monday to 1 January.

INTERVIEW BY DIONA GREGORY

After August, January is the boom time for buying new cars. Gavin Green picks the best of the bunch, whatever your budget

New cars for a new year: your guide to the class of 1999

The annual August plate-change may be over, much to the relief of the very people who first requested it (the car industry). January, however, remains a key month for car-buying. After all, the next best thing to a new letter on the plate is a new year on the registration documents. Accordingly, high-street stores shouldn't be the only places with queues of eager buyers lining up after Christmas. The car dealers, who need a bit of New Year cheering up, should also be doing very nicely. But where to spend your money? Here's our guide to the best new cars for the new year.

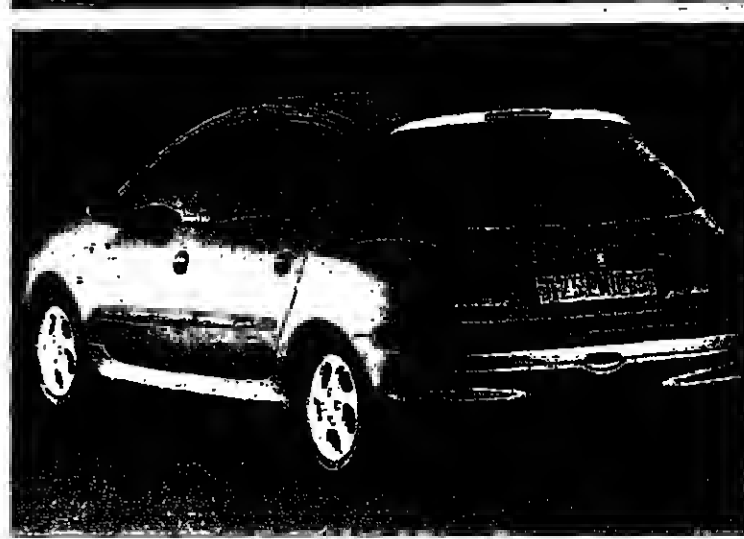
City cars: Go to the Continent and order one of the new Mercedes-Benz Smart cars (about £7,000), the most cleverly conceived city car ever. UK sales aren't scheduled until 2000, at the earliest. Funky to look at, and a huzz to drive, the new Smart is more than a foot shorter than a Mini, so it's a cinch to park. It is also beautifully built. Mind you, for long motorway dashes or four-up family motoring you'll need something bigger. If you don't fancy shopping abroad, go for a Fiat Seicento (from £6,495) which, unlike the Smart, has back seats.

Fiesta-class superminis: The French have given us a brace of good cars in this class this year - the (Coventry-built) Peugeot 206 (from £8,945), and the new Renault Clio (from £8,350). The Peugeot is roomier and more fun to drive. The only drawback is the poor driving position for big-footed men. Also recommended is the Volkswagen Polo (from £8,290), but avoid the flaccid 1-litre models.

Golf-sized hatchbacks: The new Ford Focus (from £12,850), Europe's Car of the Year, has raised the stakes so high in this sector that rivals must be wondering what to do to catch up. It's superb to drive, economical, roomy and stylish. But a Volkswagen Golf (from £12,250) is better made, and feels a classier car inside.

Mondeo-sized family cars: The Volkswagen Passat (from £15,450) is the pick of the bunch. The best engine options are either the 1.8-litre 20-valve petrol motor, or the superbly economical 1.9-litre turbo-diesel. Also recommended: the new Honda Accord (from £15,285), a car of almost seamless competence, if bland.

Sporty saloons: The BMW 3-series (from £19,745), which was revised this year, is the pick. It is such a superbly rounded



Leading the pack: (above) Mercedes S-class 500; (top right) Ford Focus; (bottom right) Peugeot 206

car, responsive to drive, beautifully made and so tangibly well engineered. As with all BMWs, go for a six-cylinder model: it is one of the world's finest engines. The graceful Alfa 156 (from £17,971) runs the BMW close but, ultimately, lacks the depth of engineering.

Big cars: The BMW 5-series (from £24,405) is probably the pick, thanks to its build quality, driver appeal and thorough engineering. Stick to the sixes: don't bother about the pricy V8. The new Alfa 166, coming in late January (from £22,500) is also

worth a glance. The new Jaguar S-Type (from about £28,000) may look a bit retro for some tastes, but the early word is that it drives superbly. It goes on sale in late March.

Luxury cars: The new Mercedes S-class (from £43,640) hits Britain in early March. It is superb, probably the most completely engineered car that has ever been launched. The Jaguar XJ8 (from £35,305) is older and less polished, but more charming, and its V8 engine is supremely refined.

Sports cars: The new Mazda MX-5 (from £15,520) is even better than the old

model - superbly practical fold-down hood, great to drive and brilliant value, helped more by its low depreciation. Also recommended: the Lotus Elise (£21,100). The quality is a bit suspect, but the driving experience is unmatched.

Supercars: The Subaru Impreza Turbo four-wheel drive (from £19,715) is the most supremely capable fast car in the world, and the quickest for gobbling up those long and winding back roads. It is also an incredibly easy car to drive. But it does look a bit dull. If you fancy cutting a bit more

of a dash, go for the touch more pricy Ferrari 550 Maranello (£149,701).

Estates: The world's best, money-no-object estate car is the Mercedes E-class wagon (from £27,845) - roomy, beautifully wrought and good to drive. If you can't afford almost 30 grand, then a Volkswagen Passat (from £16,410) is very nearly as good.

4x4s: Britain's favourite off-roader, the Land Rover Discovery (from £25,520), has been completely revised, although, with its carry-over styling, you'd never know it. The new Disco is miles better than its roly-poly

predecessor. Buy the turbo-diesel: the V8 petrol model's thirst for fuel will very soon bankrupt you. If competent on-road behaviour is what you really, really want, and you think a 4x4 would spice up your life, then get yourself a Mercedes M-class (from £31,780). If that's too big, go for the Land Rover Freelander (from £16,570), cool and sporty.

People carrier: The new Renault Espace (from £19,670) is king, due to fantastic versatility. If five seats are enough, the Renault Megane Scenic (from £12,995) is fine value, practical and good to drive.

Ford's big cat's got good looks but no claws

The Cougar has a great ad (Dennis Hopper reliving *Easy Rider*) and eye-catching styling. But how does it drive? By Roger Bell



FIRST THERE was the Ford Capri, the car (as the admen insisted) you always promised yourself. It sold briskly, wore out three suits of clothes, and made pots of money. After its demise, Ford did without a coupé until 1994, when the US-built Probe was imported to dispatch Vauxhall's pretty Calibra. It wasn't a bad car, the Probe, but it wasn't an especially memorable one, either. It didn't capture the mood of the nation as the Capri had done. Serious drivers spurned it (as they did the now defunct Calibra). Sales bombed.

Now we have the Cougar - Ford's third middleweight coupé since the late Sixties. Just as the rear-drive Capri was a dressed-up Cortina, so the Cougar, mid-Atlantic in style and flavour, is a Mondeo in drag. And

there's nothing wrong with that, given the Mondeo's qualities.

Ford's bold "new edge" design, first seen in the Ka, later adopted for the Puma (Cougar's kid brother) and the mainstream Focus, well suited the adventurous Cougar. A coupé without style is a coupé without point. However, "new edge" - think of it as definition by intersecting arcs - does tend to polarise opinions, so the Cougar is not to everyone's liking. Aggressively faced and curiously scalloped, it has head-turning presence, but not the breathtaking elegance of Peugeot's 406 coupé - one of several rivals that are not going to make it easy for the Cougar.

Dynamically, the range-topping 2.5 V6 (there is also a 2.0 "four"), struggles to make the grade against

more powerful opposition. The 140mph V6 is no sluggard, but it sounds more exciting than it feels when accelerating. Not that there is anything mid-mannered about the smooth, wailing engine's delivery - best exploited by indulgent use of a slick gearchange. What the hefty Cougar needs (and will probably get) is the Mondeo ST200's more powerful 200bhp engine. But even with the present 168bhp screamer, economy is indifferent if you exploit the performance.

After the Focus that I drove, the same day, the Cougar's handling and steering felt a hit remote and lifeless. Competent yes, uplifting no. Generous tyres push up cornering powers and safety margins - reinforced by sophisticated anti-

lock brakes and traction control which protect against wheelspin and skids. Standard equipment includes two airbags, leather upholstery, air-conditioning (or sun-roof alloy wheels and cruise control).

The 2.5 V6 wants for little in the way of kit. By coupé standards, it is also roomy, more a full four-seater than a two-plus-two. A hickbat for powered front seats that don't support as well as they should, bouquets for a fully adjustable steering wheel and stylish dash.

While the Cougar may lack that spark of genius which distinguishes the cheaper Focus, Ford's new middleweight coupé is, if not a memorable driving experience, at least an enjoyable means of transport. And boy, do the neighbours notice.

SPECIFICATIONS

FORD COUGAR 2.5 V6
Price: £21,000
Engine: 2544cc, six cylinders, 24 valves, 166bhp at 6250rpm
Transmission: five-speed manual gearbox, front-wheel drive
Performance: 140mph, 0-60 in 8.3sec, 29.4mpg combined cycle

RIVALS

Alfa Romeo GTV 3.0 V6: £27,795. Striking looks, great engine, faster than Ford. A gem.
Fiat Coupé 2.0 20V Turbo: £22,825. Testosterone on a budget. Stinking performance, great to drive, striking looks.

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MARKET RESEARCH 35 DAYS R.H. DRIVE CHOLESTEROL FREE			
ALFA ROMEO 156 1.8	£12,995	£12,995	£12,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 2.0	£13,995	£13,995	£13,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 2.5	£14,995	£14,995	£14,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 3.0	£15,995	£15,995	£15,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 3.2	£16,995	£16,995	£16,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 3.5	£17,995	£17,995	£17,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 3.8	£18,995	£18,995	£18,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 4.0	£19,995	£19,995	£19,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 4.2	£20,995	£20,995	£20,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 4.4	£21,995	£21,995	£21,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 4.6	£22,995	£22,995	£22,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 4.8	£23,995	£23,995	£23,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 5.0	£24,995	£24,995	£24,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 5.2	£25,995	£25,995	£25,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 5.4	£26,995	£26,995	£26,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 5.6	£27,995	£27,995	£27,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 5.8	£28,995	£28,995	£28,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 6.0	£29,995	£29,995	£29,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 6.2	£30,995	£30,995	£30,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 6.4	£31,995	£31,995	£31,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 6.6	£32,995	£32,995	£32,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 6.8	£33,995	£33,995	£33,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 7.0	£34,995	£34,995	£34,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 7.2	£35,995	£35,995	£35,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 7.4	£36,995	£36,995	£36,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 7.6	£37,995	£37,995	£37,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 7.8	£38,995	£38,995	£38,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 8.0	£39,995	£39,995	£39,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 8.4	£41,995	£41,995	£41,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 8.6	£42,995	£42,995	£42,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 8.8	£43,995	£43,995	£43,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 9.2	£45,995	£45,995	£45,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 9.4	£46,995	£46,995	£46,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 9.6	£47,995	£47,995	£47,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 10.6	£52,995	£52,995	£52,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 10.8	£53,995	£53,995	£53,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 11.2	£55,995	£55,995	£55,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 11.6	£57,995	£57,995	£57,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 11.8	£58,995	£58,995	£58,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 13.4	£66,995	£66,995	£66,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 13.6	£67,995	£67,995	£67,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 13.8	£68,995	£68,995	£68,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 14.4	£71,995	£71,995	£71,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 14.6	£72,995	£72,995	£72,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 14.8	£73,995	£73,995	£73,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 15.8	£78,995	£78,995	£78,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 17.6	£87,995	£87,995	£87,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 18.6	£92,995	£92,995	£92,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 18.8	£93,995	£93,995	£93,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 19.4	£96,995	£96,995	£96,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 19.6	£97,995	£97,995	£97,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 19.8	£98,995	£98,995	£98,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 20.6	£102,995	£102,995	£102,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 25.4	£126,995	£126,995	£126,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 25.6	£127,995	£127,995	£127,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 30.4	£151,995	£151,995	£151,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 30.6	£152,995	£152,995	£152,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 31.4	£156,995	£156,995	£156,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 31.6	£157,995	£157,995	£157,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 31.8	£158,995	£158,995	£158,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 37.4	£186,995	£186,995	£186,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 37.6	£187,995	£187,995	£187,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 37.8	£188,995	£188,995	£188,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 38.0	£189,995	£189,995	£189,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 38.2	£190,995	£190,995	£190,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 38.4	£191,995	£191,995	£191,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 38.6	£192,995	£192,995	£192,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 38.8	£193,995	£193,995	£193,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 39.2	£195,995	£195,995	£195,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 39.4	£196,995	£196,995	£196,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 39.6	£197,995	£197,995	£197,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 39.8	£198,995	£198,995	£198,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 41.6	£207,995	£207,995	£207,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 41.8	£208,995	£208,995	£208,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 42.6	£212,995	£212,995	£212,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 42.8	£213,995	£213,995	£213,995
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ALFA ROMEO 156 43.2	£215,995	£215,995	£215,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 43.4	£216,995	£216,995	£216,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 43.6	£217,995	£217,995	£217,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 43.8	£218,995	£218,995	£218,995
ALFA ROMEO 156 44.0	£219,		



Buy back to the future

The passion for all things Sixties is slowly moving into the property market. By Penny Jackson

At the moment, just about anything from the Sixties is snapped up. Lamps, chairs, sofas and rugs are displayed with new-found admiration anywhere from Edwardian semis to loft apartments. Anywhere, that is, but a Sixties house. On a scale of trendiness, the marker hovers very close to zero when it comes to the homes of that decade.

Box-like, functional and unloved, they are often a second best for buyers who want a particular location, but cannot afford older properties. The principles of the modern movement of bringing light into buildings and freeing up the internal space were distorted by the push to build as many homes as quickly and cheaply as possible. Yet the good homes of the time are unerringly close to what many buyers are looking for today.

This is an irony not lost on Jane Collins (above), who loves all things Sixties. Hers is no sudden conversion - her loyalty has been unwavering through chintz, Victoriana and Conran chic. "Ten years ago, people would walk into my house and admire it, but they wouldn't feel happy with it for themselves. Now they love it and buy anything they can."

Collins's faith is evident from her London shop, Sixty 6. Even though contemporary designers produce good copies of Sixties furniture, people want something original. "Otherwise their homes look like catalogues. Most lighting was much better made 30 years ago."

So how many take their treasures, like the newly arrived white-plastic-and-steel swivel chair, back to a Sixties setting? As far as Jane Collins knows, none. "I am sure it will happen. No one has set a trend yet. I would much rather live in a cube than something mock-Georgian."

The features of a period property so closely conform to what many people regard as the perfect family house that they could never imagine living elsewhere. Until a year ago, Elizabeth Savell would have rejected a Sixties house out of hand. But she and her family wanted to live in Dulwich, south-east London, and they needed a garage. "At first we thought it would be a wrench moving from an older place, but we really enjoy living here. We use the whole house in a way we never did before, and it feels roomier than it really is. It's surprising how many people say they had never thought of looking at something like this, but now think it is a good idea."

She is particularly struck by the enormous amount of well-thought-out storage space - a design feature of the time - and by how light it is. "We have a lot of windows and the way the rooms are laid out gives an impression of space." Their furniture didn't adapt quite as easily, though. "We got rid of some pieces, and found ourselves looking at things we never would have dreamt of buying before."

Avril Campbell, from Bushells, the estate agents, is used to people somewhat grudgingly looking at Sixties homes. Some will refuse to consider anything later than turn-of-the-century, and reserve a special horror for anything built

in the Sixties, while others are won over by position, price and, more often than not, the garage. "They may be able to get a four-bedroom detached house with a double garage for around £350,000, which is good for the area. They then have more money to spend on the house and end up having made a fair saving."

On their books at present is the unlikely object of a great deal of attention: a Sixties bungalow, dubbed The Party House. A developer has opened up virtually the whole bungalow using glass doors and screens. Purple timber decking has been used in the courtyard garden. Square Foot, the developers, have moved as far away as possible from the grumpy image of the bungalow, and used a combination of white walls, spot lighting and wood flooring to attract a new kind of buyer.

In Blackheath, the Sixties-built Span houses, which were considered a cut above many of their ilk, have always been in demand. They tend to have large open-plan ground floors, with screens to make the space flexible, and were intended as good, affordable housing. That is still the case today, according to Mark Epps of Winkworth. It is a way of a getting a foothold on the Cator Estate, one of the

best locations in Blackheath. "Some people who are horrified by them at first, grow to really like them. It is a way of getting on to the estate for as little as £140,000 to £200,000."

Alice Moro is selling a house originally designed by her father Peter Moro, an architect, on the same estate. Most interest in the property comes from those already living in a modern house, who appreciate the huge open-plan, split-level living space. It has five bedrooms and a three-quarter-acre garden. "I get the feeling that people are fed up with harking back to the past. They want space, and they are no longer so frightened of modern houses. The British have a peculiar dislike of functionalism."

The house, priced between £650,000 and £700,000, is listed. It is not likely to appeal to those who cannot live without architraves and ceiling roses, but it does knock on the head the notion that exposing brickwork and doing without internal walls is an exclusively Nineties trend. It may also be safer than taking walks out of old houses.

Bushells: 0181-299 1722. Moro house: 0171-403 3166. Sixty 6, 66 Marylebone High Street, London W1: 0171-224 6066

'I am sure it will happen. No one has set a trend yet. I would much rather live in a cube than something mock-Georgian'

STEPPING STONES SEARCH FOR A SMALLHOLDING



COLIN AND Sue Cuthbert have bought five properties since 1979. They now own a five-acre smallholding in Suffolk.

Most of us have vague aspirations as to where we want to live and some eventually get there. But Sue and Colin say: "From the start we had one aim - to own our own smallholding."

The path was not easy. Sue had stopped work to have children and Colin's work was lowly paid, but they were determined to slowly climb the property ladder. "We knew we had to work hard and live cheaply to achieve our aim."

Their first step was a two-bedroom end of terrace in the market town of Stowmarket, bought for £8,000 in 1979. It was close to Sue's job in the library, and Colin travelled by moped to his council depot. Two years later, they sold "by some miracle" for £14,000 when prices peaked.

In 1981 they bought a three-bedroom terrace for £16,000 and Sue stayed at home to look after their daughter. Their son's arrival prompted a search for "somewhere with a bit more garden" and in 1984 they sold for £20,000. They heard about a timber-framed house on offer at £10,000, which had a council closing order on it. Some buyers may have balked at the work required but Sue and Colin were undeterred. "We went for it even though it meant living in a caravan for a year."

The family moved in to the house in 1985. Was this their ideal home? "We hated it! It was dark and gloomy and we moved as soon as we could."

They stayed until 1986, to avoid repaying the grant, but quickly sold for £40,000. By now they had enough for a smallholding, but were limited in area by Colin's work so plumped for a three-bedroom bungalow in half an acre, which cost £42,000. They added an extension for their third child and were settled until they sold for £71,000 in 1991.

They then decided to take stock and rent while looking for their life-long dream. "We were getting older so it was now or never." In 1992 "stretching our budget almost to breaking point", they bought a five-acre smallholding in Suffolk for £85,000. "We got it cheaply as it was run down, overgrown and needed work."

The Cuthberts now lead a semi-sufficient lifestyle, keeping pigs, goats, and chickens, and growing their food. "Ours is not a story of quick profits, but with hard work, DIY and taking chances anyone can own their ideal home."

GINETTA VENDORICKAS

THOSE MOVES IN BRIEF

1979 - bought two-bedroom house for £8,000, sold for £14,000.

1981 - bought three-bedroom terrace end for £16,000, sold for £20,000.

1984 - bought timber frame for £10,000 (plus £10,000 grant) sold for £40,000.

1986 - bought bungalow for £42,000, sold for £71,000 in 1991.

1992 - bought smallholding for £85,000, now worth over £130,000

For your moves to be featured, write to: Nic Cicotti, Stepping Stones, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. £100 for the best story

As much art as architecture

Art Deco houses are back in fashion, but many have been 'modernised' and are now hard to find. By Fiona Brandhorst

THERE CAN'T be many houses that make you feel "on top of the world" but when Jane and Andrew Fryer viewed a Thirties "cruise-liner style" house perched on one of the highest points in London, they were buzzing with enthusiasm. It wasn't just the views from the south London vantage point (on a clear day, Windsor Castle, about 40 miles away, is visible), the house itself was a fine, if neglected, example of Modernist architecture, with its flat roof, white walls and metal railings.

This style of house is enjoying a revival. The problem is finding one that hasn't been aesthetically ruined inside and out - "modernised" almost always includes double-glazing and sometimes pitched roofs. However, fine examples can still be found. An estate agent, Nick Staton, recently sold the singer Paul Young's Art Deco home in north London for more than £1m. The house is a copy of one by Frank Lloyd Wright.

"People are prepared to pay a premium for a house like this, although it's a specialised market and doesn't sell everyone," says Mr Staton.

Jane Fryer has named their house Welcome Aboard, and one step inside the gateway brings you

into a nautical fantasy. As I walked through the pebbled garden full of exotic architectural palms and shrubs, bordered by red-and-white-striped lifebelts, I had the distinct feeling I'd left my luggage behind.

"We would still have wanted it without the views," says Jane, who along with Andrew, loved the idea of "living quarters" on the first floor and the way the light floods into every room from curved windows.

"Andrew's only misgiving was the amount of work that was needed," Jane says. Their surveyor thought that around £9,000 would "see it straight". That was seven years ago; in fact the Fryers have spent nearer £100,000 on renovation and decoration. "There was no cavity insulation," says Jane, "and every room had to be thermally lined and replastered."

Having previously renovated a large Victorian house, Andrew had honed his DIY skills and knew his limitations. Yet leaving the rewiring, plumbing and roofing to the tradesmen was frustrating.

"Most of them had never worked on a house like this and didn't know what they were up against," Andrew says. The integral garage had been

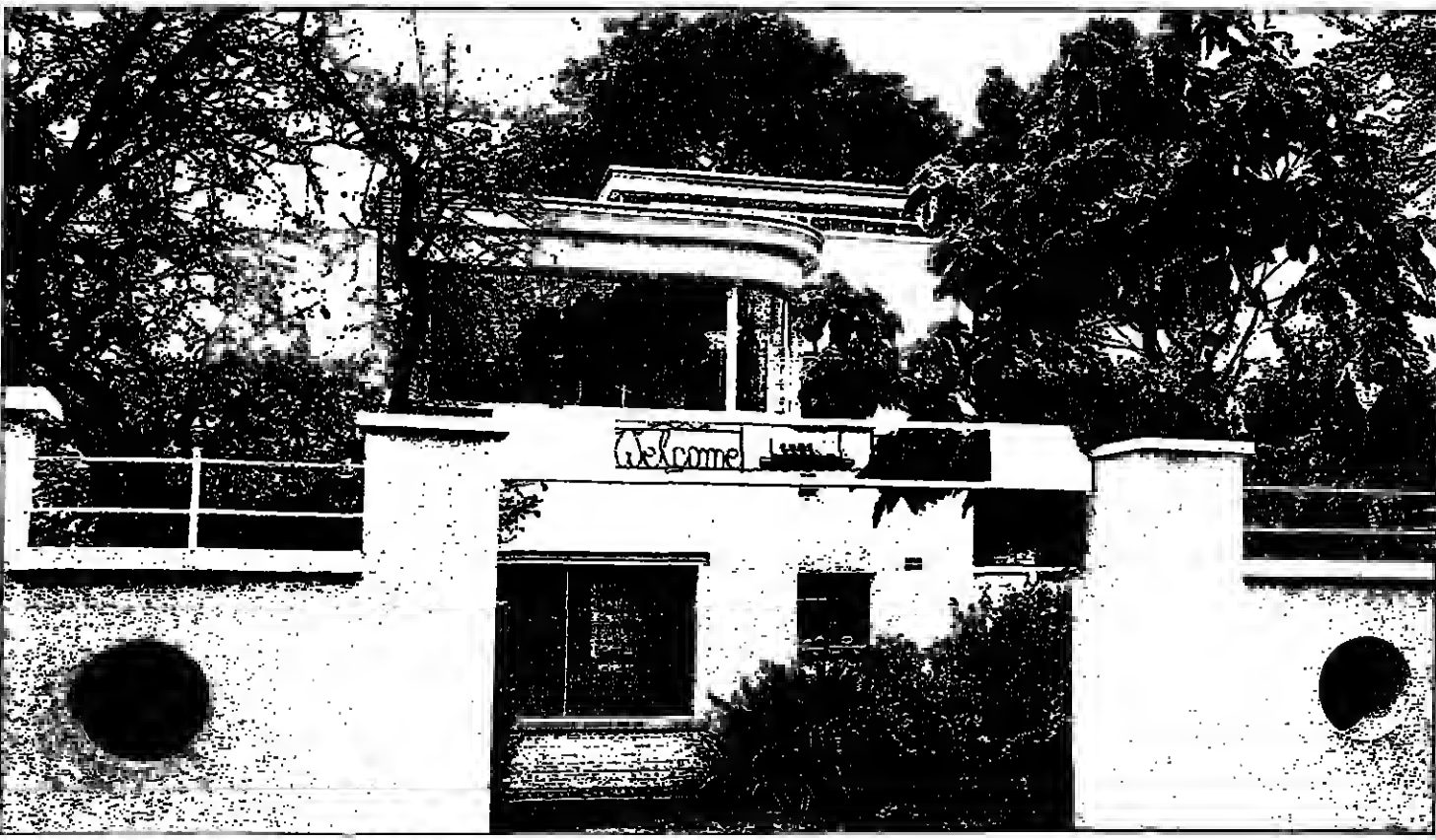
half-converted into a room but an asbestos ceiling still had to be removed. "It was just me and a face mask," Andrew adds.

The house was built in 1934 and designed by architects whose work included Ealing Film Studios and the White House Hotel in Regent's Park.

Roy Scotchbrook, an estate agent who specialises in unusual property, has sold the four-bedroom house three times in the last 20 years. "This style of house has become popular only in the last few years, and was a bit tatty when the Fryers bought it." It seems the expensive renovations have paid off. Jane and Andrew paid £175,000 for it in 1991 and it is now valued at £350,000.

"We haven't been totally purist with the decorations," Andrew says, "but there is an empathy with the period." Jane's collection of ceramics from the Twenties and Thirties are displayed simply, against white walls. The main bathroom is original Art Deco, with classic green-and-black tiling and chrome accessories.

Strips of miniature lights stud the steps of the oak-stripped staircase leading to the first floor. "It's our Hollywood touch," Jane says. The kitchen was the last room in the



'Welcome Aboard', the restored Art Deco home of Jane and Andrew Fryer

Nicola Kurtz

house to be completed, a few months ago. "We couldn't recreate a Thirties kitchen," adds Jane. "It would have been quite ugly. The original tiles were in a terrible condition and just had to go." Instead, Jane chose a ship-shape, steel galley kitchen, totally blowing her budget. "Because it doesn't lead out to the garden, we've made the most of the large balcony across the hallway. It's sunny and secluded, and you get the views. Wooden decking would finish it off."

Friends in the Art Deco business have been generous with their gifts.

"People have just found us things," Andrew muses. Railing-lights outside the house and a few portholes here and there add to the period ambience. A glass door-panel etched with the bow of a steamer came from a hotel. And a painting of the Queen Mary came from the lounge bar of a pub in the Isle of Wight.

Jane likes to escape to the roof-top studio and terrace.

"In summer I drape towels around and imagine the heat smog over London is where the beach is.

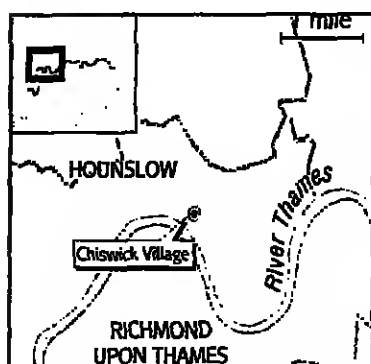
And you couldn't have a better view when you're doing the ironing."

Surely the ultimate complement to your hard graft is a stream of people wanting to buy your house. "We often have cards through the door asking us if we want to sell. One couple offered us cash. It's very flattering, but we're not selling."

Cash purchasers would be more than welcome at Harrods Estates, which is selling the Art Deco Burgh Island Hotel, near Salcombe in Devon. It was bought in poor repair by the Art Deco dealers Tony and

Bea Porter in 1986 and restoration is now complete, including the Palm Court cocktail bar frequented by Edward VIII and Mrs Simpson, Agatha Christie and Noel Coward. If you haven't yet planned your Millennium party, for around £2.5m you'll get the hotel, Burgh Island itself and the local pub The Pilchards Inn. Martini cocktail, anyone?

Statons, 0181-449 3383; Scotchbrooks, 0181-699 0841; Christie & Co, 01392 259371; www.worldcollectors.net.com/nrtdeco

HOT SPOT
CHISWICK VILLAGE, WEST LONDONWhere a mall is not a mall,
and a village not a village

Chiswick Village is in Chiswick. That much is clear and indisputable. So is Chiswick Mall. But Chiswick Village is not a village, and Chiswick Mall is not a shopping centre. Even Chiswick's reputation as a haven for well-heeled families isn't quite what it seems.

Properties in this desirable part of west London do command stiff prices, as exemplified by the seven-figure riverside homes along Chiswick Mall. But affordable flats for singles or sharers are also available, not least in Chiswick Village, which is the name both of a 280-apartment complex spread over 15 blocks and the circular (in fact, A-shaped) road that lies in front of them.

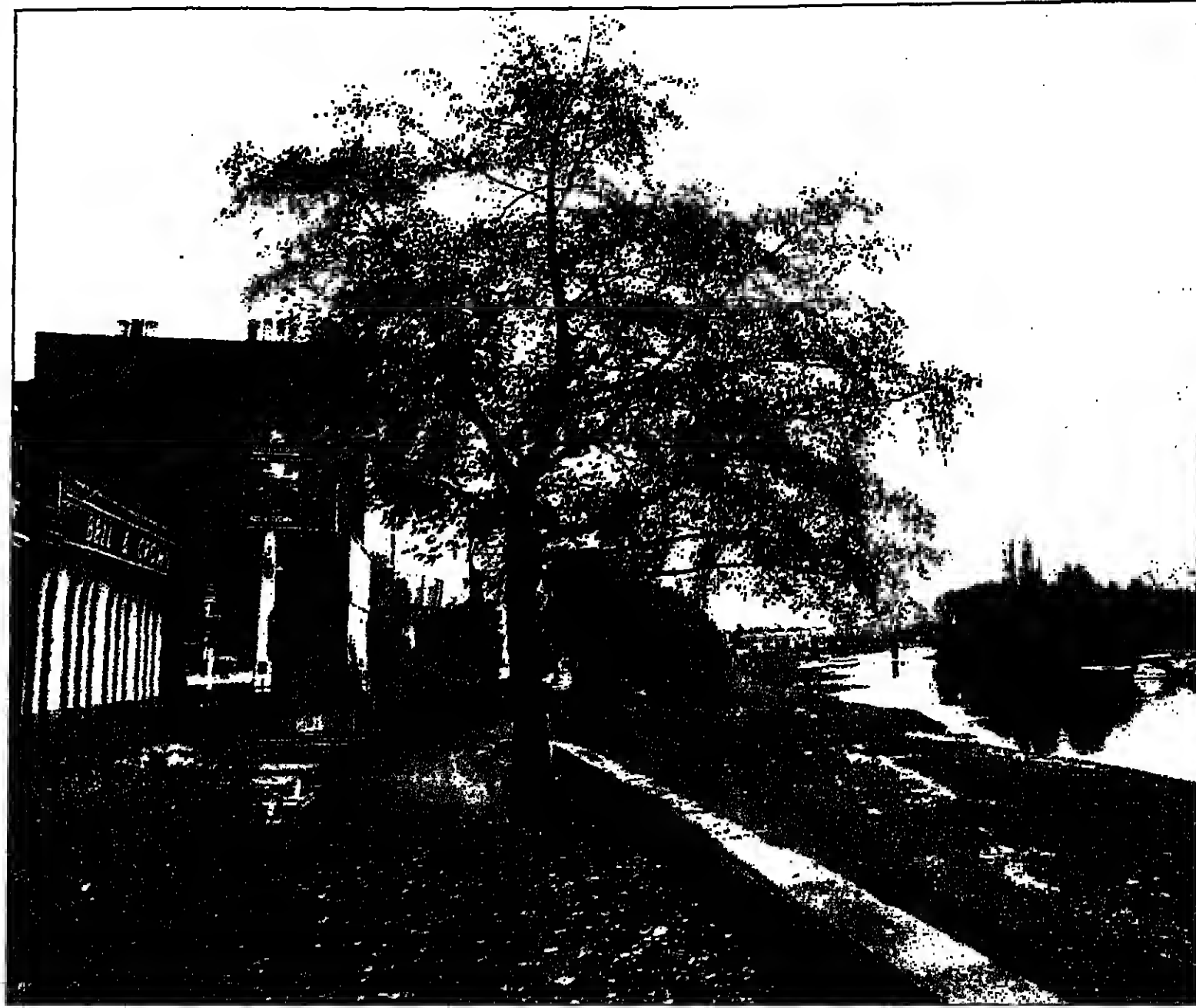
Chiswick Village looks very much like a council estate but, since this is Chiswick, even that is illusory. The estate is and always has been privately owned and was fairly upmarket at one time. A few years ago, the tenants started proceedings to buy the freehold collectively. Although ultimately successful, this was only after being enmeshed in complex, costly and bitter legal skirmishes. The tenants and their property values have only recently started to recover.

"We went through an absolute horror of dirty lengthy legal battles against two freeholders, but we won," says Pat Salt, who has lived in Chiswick Village for eight years with her husband and two children.

Prices plummeted: "No one would lend while we were in court, and if you wanted to buy, you had to have cash," says Ms Salt. Cash-buyers tend to be investors buying to let, and in terms of commitment to the property, Ms Salt regrets that the percentage of owner-occupiers isn't higher.

During the enfranchisement proceedings, the owners had succeeded in setting groups of tenants against one another, and animosity continued even after the solicitors had finally packed their briefcases for good. "Now, prices are rising, and the old village spirit is slowly coming back," says Ms Salt.

"Bringing up children here was great. They could safely play on the green in front," says Ms Salt. "We have trains on both sides and a motorway on one, but you do get used to the



With much of it running beside the river, Chiswick is a desirable area—but not all its properties are priced out of reach—Nicola Kurtz

noise." And as far as transport is concerned, it is pretty convenient: "We are near Gunnersbury station and the M4 and North and South Circular roads. The position is great." Heating and hot water are communal and most flats have balconies overlooking the green.

Chiswick Village's developer also built the so-called three Bs—Beverly, Beaumont, and Belgrave Courts—which are closer to Chiswick's high road, and more expensive.

David Bell, of Winkworth estate agents, notes that since Chiswick Village's enfranchisement, "the price gap has been narrowing, but," he adds, "if the three Bs were to enfranchise, prices would spurt up. And Chiswick Village has lower service charges."

ROBERT LIEBMAN

LOWDOWN

Transport: Chiswick Park serves the Ealing Broadway branch of the District Line, and Gunnersbury serves the Richmond branch and the North London Line. Buses link Chiswick with Hammersmith, Hounslow and Richmond.

Prices: A reasonable two-bed flat in Chiswick Village sells for about £115,000, and for £140,000 in the three Bs. "Some flats in the three courts have a reception room and a separate dining room," says Winkworth's Bell. In Chiswick Village, flats needing work and

lacking balconies can sell closer to £100,000.

Going to Court Again: Other affordable blocks of flats in Chiswick include Dewsbury Court, Watchfield Court, Sutton Court and Arlington Park Mansions. Examine room size and, with ground floor flats in the three Bs, ask questions about the hot water pipes below the floor. It's Your Show: Pubs, cafés and restaurants on Strand on the Green are nearby. **Council Tax:** Hounslow's Band A is £487 and Band H is £1,450.

Taking the Waters: Chiswick Village used to have a pool, and the three Bs still have a communal small outdoor pool. Otherwise it's Edensor Road or Fountains Leisure in Brentford. **Whistler's Roundabout Here:** Hogarth and Whistler both rest in the cemetery near the Hogarth Roundabout.

Estate Agents: Foxtons (0181-996 6000); John Spencer (0181-995 4321); Sworn & Co (0181-995 3076); Townsend Tyser Greenwood (0181-994 7022); Whitman & Co (0181-747 8800).

THREE TO VIEW
FOR UNDER £200,000

THE OLD Post Office in Norton in Hales, near Market Drayton in Shropshire, is a three-bedroom traditional house in one of the county's best-kept villages.

Surrounded by gardens, the creeper-clad property has a well-proportioned sitting room with sash windows and brick open fireplace and hearth. There's a separate dining room, breakfast room and 11'6" by 11'5" kitchen with fitted units and built-in oven and hob. There are also three large store rooms on the ground floor. Outside, the house has shutters to the first floor windows and pretty barge boarding.

Price £180,000, details from GA 01630 658222.



WYVERNE, in Broxted near Great Dunmow in Essex is a modern detached three-bedroom house with rural views at the back, towards the village church. Built in 1973, and recently extended, it had two reception rooms, dining room and separate kitchen and utility rooms.

The bedrooms have built-in wardrobe cupboards and there is a separate shower room and bathroom. On the second floor, is a 11'6" by 6'5" study with fitted desk top and drawers, and an en suite too. In the 114' garden there's a tandem double garage, lawns, shed and ornamental pond with water lilies. Price £180,000, details from Trembath Welch 01371 872117



THIS 18TH-century Grade II listed house is in Canterbury and offers views over the Cathedral. It has previously been both a pub and a shop. Now a private, four-bedroom house, number 46 Broad Street is within easy walking distance of the city centre. Added to that, it has a 87ft walled garden and a garage.

The three-storey house has been partially improved, including a new roof just over 10 years ago, and it has a new 22ft kitchen and conservatory. The 31ft reception room has built-in shelves and double doors leading outside. There is another drawing room on the first floor. The price is £185,000 and details are available from Cluttons Daniel Smith 01277 457441.

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